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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

# Indian Residential Schooling: the Native Perspective

by

Linda R. Bull

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
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IN

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## Abstract

This is an exploratory study of experiences of elders with schooling in Indian residential schools, to provide a better understanding of the difficulties faced by Indians as they take control of their own schooling. It documents how the elders were affected, both positively and negatively, by attending these schools, with special attention to experiences with discipline and how it differed from traditional forms of social control.

The study begins with a brief look at the history of Indian schooling in Canada, and Indian and European values and attitudes towards children. It then presents information from archives describing Roman Catholic and United Church documentation related to Indians and Indian schooling. However, the core of the work is interviews with 10 men and women from Indian communities in North-Central Alberta who attended either Blue Quills Indian Residential School(and its predecessor) or the Edmonton Indian Industrial school (and its predecessor) between 1900 and 1940.

Despite the beliefs of missionary educators that they would improve the lives of Indians through schooling and Christianization, it is apparent from these interviews that the childrens' experiences in residential schools were lonely, degrading, at times brutal, and that there was little in the way of academic learning which occurred. Major difficulties with taking on adult roles followed for many of the elders; they found strength to change their situations or to heal outside the school in their own culture. It is the maintenance of customs and traditions by traditonal Indians who have persevered against the pressures to assimilate through the years which will enable the damage done by the residential school to eventually be eliminated from the community, so that Indians can create a healthy and culturally rich environment for their children.

## Acknowledgements

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## Prologue

My research directed me to an area that I felt required some immediate attention, even though I feel like I have taken forever to complete it. During the time that I was attending classes I would oftentimes go listen to my people speak amongst themselves about the type of schooling that they experienced. Much of their stories were of their experiences, the hurt, the suffering, and injustices that they still felt while they were sharing their stories. At the time the thought of writing from their perspective had not yet entered my mind. It was not until at the last family gathering that we shared with my late father-in-law, William Bull, that I knew something had to be done, in the form of documenting their story from their perspective of their life at the residential schools in which they had resided. It was from the inspiration and encouragement which came from my father-in-law, from the knowledge he had of his culture, history and experience that gave me the incentive and I vowed at that time that I would one day do such a study.

The research that entailed documentation from the church and the government directed me to various provincial archives within Canada and especially to the Public Archives of Canada in Ottawa.The part that I enjoyed most, and from which I learned the most, was the visits and the time spent interviewing the elders.

In the end what I found was an attitude that did not take too kindly to Indian people, even though it came from the church and from the government. I saw with my own eyes the kind of correspondence between church people and government officials about the way in which they worked together in Christianizing, civilizing and educating my people. The more research I did the more Indianized I became. I felt that someone had to begin promoting the values that are inherent within Indian traditional cultures, to reeducate both Native and non-Native societies about the reality of the Indian situation. I also found that there needs to be a great deal of healing within Indian communities and having the elders tell their stories from their perspective is one way to begin that process.

## I: Introduction

For more than a century, native people of Alberta (and elsewhere in Canada) were not considered full "Canadians" and were dealt with as wards of what was at best a paternalistic government under policies intended to assimilate Indians as their indigenous culture "vanished." One major instrument for assimilation was the institutionalized school which was provided by the government (or churches with government support and approval). Only in very recent years, since the early 1970's, has it become clear to government that Indians do not wish to be assimilated but to retain their own cultures and particularly to become involved in decision-making about their children's education (Pauls, 1984) and the schools those children attend. "Indian control of Indian education" is a slogan with growing popularity among Indian people and a policy toward which the Department of Indian Affairs has recently been moving.

However, it is much more difficult to implement such a slogan and policy than to simply say it. Multiple problem dimensions have arisen as Indian people attempt to become involved in running their own schools. Some of the problems are a product of the particularly difficult times which Indian students had in residential schools. To date there has been relatively little study of this situation.

### Purpose and Problem

One major problem associated with the current trends of schooling lies in the community attitudes about the very nature of school and what can be expected of it. Closely related, is a lack of experience in analysis of problems leading to decision-making. While Indian peoples were generally subjected to institutionalized schooling, they had no part in the development of the institution. It would seem that an important and missing consideration is the perspective of Indian adults of their own schooling experiences. This study will document how they were affected,both

positively and negatively, by attending residential schools[1]. Special attention will be given to attitudes about disciplinary punishment in schools and the manner in which it differed from traditional patterns of control. Corporal punishment and other forms of physical punishment were not used by 'traditional'[2] Cree people, yet this was one method employed as 'a' form of social control by residential schools.

**Design and Format**

The primary data for this study are derived from an ethnographic narrative reconstruction of the cultural scene (Spradley, 1972) of "school" as known by a selected population of native Indian adults currently between the ages of about 50 to 86 years old. The focus was to be on former students of five schools in what is considered to be Northeastern Alberta who attended school within a time frame of 1900 - 1940. The institutions identified in the area, and in which it was expected the people would be formally educated were as follows:

1. Sacred Heart School[3] Roman Catholic
   Saddle Lake, Alberta
   (In 1931, these students moved to
   #2, Blue Quills Residential School)

---

[1] It is sometimes observed that Indian residential schools were, first of all, residential schools and in that sense like other residential school. There are some shared experiences for students who attend any residential school, but the Indian Residential School needs to be recognized as a particular kind of institution. It did not focus on, or even provide, solid academic programs to students; parents were usually unable to remove their children or prevent them from attending; children often did not speak the language of the school and were forbidden to speak the language they knew; and the specific task of the school was to remove children from the influence of their parents. No doubt there are other differences, but the ones mentioned here are enough to indicate Indian Residential Schools and other church administered residential schools in Canada should be considered fundamentally different institutions.

[2] 'Traditional', in this sense, means those native people who are maintaining and living according to native traditional values and usually are more spiritually- oriented. Therefore physical abuse and /corporal punishment were not employed.

[3] The predecessor of this school was La Mission Notres Dames des Victoires (Lac La Biche). It was built by the Oblates and the Grey Nuns taught there when it opened in 1862. In 1898 students and staff moved to the new boarding school on the Saddle Lake Reserve. (Canada, 1900).

2. Blue Quill's Residential School — Roman Catholic
   St. Paul, Alberta

3. St. Albert Residential School — Roman Catholic
   (Youville) St. Albert, Alberta

4. Red Deer Industrial School — Methodist Church
   Red Deer, Alberta
   (closed, 1919, moved to #5,
   Edmonton Industrial School)

5. Edmonton Industrial School — Methodist Church
   Edmonton, Alberta
   (used to be called St. Albert Boarding
   School/Indian Residential School,
   later Poundmaker's)

However four of the schools above are actually two schools which moved to other areas and were renamed, and one did not seem to have students from the geograhic area of interest [4], so the actual number of institutions might be considered just two, Blue Quills Residential School and the Edmonton Industrial School. Because of the fact that much information on the schools they attended is common knowledge amongst native people, this study includes a time-frame from the opening of the schools with which they were familiar until their closure. However, the focus of the native experience will cover the time people being interviewed were actually in residence.

Oral history techniques of open-ended questions during extensive interviews pursued detailed documentation of the former pupils' experiences; these have been reported in a composite overview and analyzed for significant patterns, especially patterns that link the

[4] No respondent indicated they attended St. Albert Catholic Residential School (Youville). It should not be confused with the other Indian school in St Albert, the Edmonton Indian Industrial school which was Methodist and is one of the schools in this study.In the year ended March 31, 1930, which would be about thirty years into the study period, there were nineteen Indian residential schools in Alberta. That year there were 70 students at Sacred Heart School, 170 at the Edmonton Indian Industrial School, and 136 at the St Albert Indian Residential School.(Canada, 1930).

discontinuity of cultural conditioning via the institutionalized formal school experiences to subsequent personal and community life experiences.

Various archival sources were also accessed for background information and details of the schools. In these, data on Indian schools are scattered and spotty. Reports pertaining to schools from Indian agents and officials from Indian Affairs, reports and/correspondence made by principals, administrators, nuns and priests who were the educators at these institutions, were reviewed. In addition government documents and church archival records were scanned for factual background data such as type of school, location, religious denomination, student population, ages, grades, place of origin of pupils.

Archives accessed were Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton; Glenbow Institute, Calgary; United Church Archives and Victoria University Archives, Toronto; Archives Deschatelets/ Oblates, Ottawa; Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa; and historical data from Government Publications, University of Alberta and University of Victoria, B.C. Some sources have been supplemented by conferences and communication with leaders of the Catholic church, namely the O.M.I. (Oblates of Mary Immaculate), of St. Albert, Alberta.

For comparative purposes and/ validation of statements made by the Indian men and women being interviewed archival records on other residential schools were scanned. These included two Catholic schools which were also in the Treaty Six Area (Duck Lake and Lebret, Saskatchewan), and two which were elsewhere in Alberta (Youville Residential School at St. Albert, Alberta, a Catholic Institution and Sacred Heart, an Anglican School on the Peigan Reserve in southern Alberta). –

**Interviewing Methodology**

The school sites and population interviewed were chosen because of the researcher's first-hand knowledge of the people. The sampling process might roughly be called a "snowball" sample, as people known and willing to be interviewed would recommend others to interview, or as I would

visit people I became aware of who could provide information and would be willing to talk about their schooling. Persons interviewed included both male and female former students from each of the schools; they were selected to ensure coverage of as much of the full time-span of the school as possible. Twelve persons were interviewed formally, and some other information was gathered through informal conversation and recollections.[5]

Interviewing was spread out over a period of a year. Informal interviews were relatively unstructured with similar questions covered with each participant. Originally, the plan was to tape these interviews but it simply did not fit with the traditional Cree modes of visitation and question-asking. Consequently, the recording process was to write a few notes during the conversation, and write more detailed notes based on recall immediately after the interview. In all cases the language of interviewing was mostly Cree.

Each interview was done at the home of the person interviewed, taking about two hours. Questions addressed were as follows: personal history (name, age, reserve, tribe, school attended, length of stay, etc.), curriculum of school (academic subjects, industry, vocation or trade, relevancy), experiences (any outstanding memories, both positive and negative), treatment or disciplinary measures from the staff, life in general in a residential school, how <u>they felt</u> about living there, one or two areas or skills which they <u>think</u> they acquired at the institution, etc. Would they recommend that their own children attend that type of school? Why or why not? Did their parents have any influence at all in their education? In what ways did their education assist them in dealing with the real world when

---

[5] It should be noted here that these people (studied) were not necessarily the first-generation to be formally educated. Research indicates that it was the parents of these students who first became institutionalized in residential schools, but they were usually already in their adolescent years, and therefore, did not attend for very long (two to three years, if that). Therefore their parents were influential 'to a degree' in their schooling, but a great deal more 'credit', at least in the Goodfish Lake - Saddle Lake area,must be given to the native missionaries who were influential in promoting "formal education" and/ Christianization for the native people.

they left the institution? Is there any information that they feel they want to discuss further?

Interpreting the information provided by interviewees required good knowledge of the Cree language.The writer is fully fluent in Cree and aware of the implications insinuated and used contextually. The Cree language is very descriptive and if an observer were an outsider, a great deal of the spoken word in relation to behavior attached to the meaning, would be misinterpreted. A derogatory connotation may be explicitly stated as a well-intended remark, but only if you are from within the culture can you understand and interpret the implication. This is a common practice amongst native people, and many 'outsiders' have miscontrued the complexity of such cultural norms. It is difficult to perceive directly, and can be understood as like having the ablility to 'read between the lines.'

Cultural non-sharing is sometimes the basis for misunderstanding and conflict. Therefore interpretation of situations as understood by native people may help reduce misunderstandings. In this sense cultural sharing viewed from within the cultural context may elevate an awareness and provide a broader understanding for decision-making or policy development within educational institutions or other socially- related institutions.

**Outline of the thesis**

This introductory chapter has described the thesis problem and presented the research methodology. The next chapter will review the literature related to Indian schooling and present historical background. The third and fourth chapter will present documentary information from archival searches, and the fifth will present the information gathered through interviewing. Chapter six will consist of the analysis and conclusions.

## II:Indian/European Values and Indian Schooling

At the time schooling was introduced to Indians in Canada the image which Europeans had of children and the expectations they had of schooling were not only much different from Indian images and expectations but also much different than contemporary Canadian views. In this chapter I will briefly describe the historical introduction of schooling to Indians and present evidence for contrasting world-views held by the two groups in contact. A better understanding of these two perspectives will help shed some light on the effects of institutionalized schooling on natives socially, psychologically, emotionally, physically and even spiritually.

### The Introduction of Schooling to Indians in Canada

The following discussion relies heavily on historians and other researchers such as Aries, 1962; Sindell, 1968; Persson, 1980, and Titley, 1983 and 1986, as well as others referenced in the text. Historically, Indian education in Canada began with missionaries who followed closely the establishment of the first fur trading companies, especially the Hudson's Bay Company. The Recollets followed by the French Jesuits, were the first of these missionaries to work among the native people in eastern Canada(Latour,G.M. 1963). The Jesuits of New France decided in 1635 to "found a seminary for young Indians for the purpose of civilizing or improving their moral condition" (Persson 1980).

In English-speaking Canada, the development of Indian schooling followed the pattern established for poor people or "paupers". For example, in Newfoundland during the 1800's, due to a lack of workhouses or almhouses (as they were called at the time) 'paupers' and children were auctioned off by public authorities to the lowest bidder in order to provide domestic and agricultural service. Industrial schools were set up for poor women and girls in 1836; that is schools which adopted the poor house policy of expecting 'inmates', to contribute to their maintenance through industrial occupations(Rooke and Schnell, 1983). It was this policy which was eventually implemented in industrial and boarding

schools set up for native 'inmates'. In addition, the labour policy was implemented with native pupils in residential schools who were trained to provide domestic and agricultural services for incoming settlers.

According to Rooke and Schnell(1983), in 1827 the Anglicans founded a "Society for Promoting Education and Industry Among the Indians and Destitute Settlers in Canada" and industrial and infant schools were set up.[1] At this time institutionalization was viewed as the most efficient and effective means of training children. Not only were institutions custodial in function (orphan asylums), repressive in management (reformatories and industrial schools), they were also viewed as giving children the opportunity to develop, give them strength and train the children's better qualities. Children were re-socialized as follows:

1.The child is physically removed from want and neglect.
2.The child is to be trained into industry, not "driven to tasks" but "apportioned according to his strength and capacity" with "due regard given to his predilections"
3.The child is to be given daily instruction of a religious and secular nature.
4.Dependents are removed from incorrigibles.
5.A home-like atmosphere is encouraged to modify the risk of institutional indifference.

Since the time of the first English school in Nova Scotia in the late 1700's 'integrated' schooling was promoted. French priests and English clergymen agreed on the desirability of this type of system in in which white children provided a model, accelerating the process by which Indian children sloughed off their 'savage behavior' during the formal educational process (Persson, 1980). However, as we will see from the following, a number of other schooling forms were developed which would be more accurately described as 'segregated' as Indian students were kept separate from other students.

In 1845, a government report recommended the adoption of a system of industrial boarding schools for Indian pupils. Dr. Ryerson,

[1]Note, the Indian was categorized with the destitute in this society.

Chief Superintendent of Education for Upper Canada, promoted a joint church-government operation which resulted in the establishment of two Indian industrial schools under the religious auspices of the Wesleyan Methodist society (Fisher 1977). Although the industrial school model was largely abandoned in the early 1900's (Daniels, 1973), the residential school system which preceeded it continued to be favored by both church and government until the 1950's.

**Historical Beginnings in Western Canada**

In the West, a typified pattern of schools begun by the Methodists, was comprised of a dairy farm, the four R's (reading, 'riting, 'rithmetic, and religion), domestic skills, agriculture, and trade-school, namely mechanics. (According to Latour, 1963, Dr. E. Ryerson referred to Mechanics, in the sense of maintaining and repairing agricultural implements.) At the same time Roman Catholic and Anglican missions continued their attempts at Indian education converting and educating native people. The concepts of education and evangelization proceeded simultaneously, one considered necessary in order to achieve the other(Chalmers, 1972).

Government aid for western mission Indian schools came in 1878 - 1879 with the Macdonald Conservatives. At that time, the buffalo had literally disappeared and as a result, native people were experiencing widespread famine. Along with the Macdonald government's desire to build a transcontinental railway and thereby promote white settlement, was the urgency in settling the starving Indians on reserves and training them towards agricultural self- support. Macdonald sent Edgar Dewdney west (N.W.T. at the time) as Indian Commissioner to teach Indians farming. The expected results did not materialize, instead came high relief costs and poverty.

Therefore the Indian Affairs Department studied the American Indian experience and decided to institute off-reserve industrial boarding schools which would remove young Indians from the tribal way of life and train them in the arts and industries of 'civilization'. In December 1878,

Deputy Minister of the Interior, J.S. Dennis submitted a memorandum to Macdonald and to the missions of N.W.T. regarding the 'native problem' and recommended American style Indian schools.

A lawyer-journalist, Nicholas F. Davin, sent out to investigate American Indian Industrial schools, recommended that the Canadian government help to establish three church-run industrial boarding schools(Titley, 1983; 1986). Negotiations began but dragged on because assistance for the starving Indians took precedence. In addition, the government attempted to economize in the establishment of schools by making use of missionaries' efforts and encouraging competition between denominations.

Finally by 1883, one school for each treaty area was in the process of being built: Treaty Four at Fort Qu'Appelle and Treaty Seven at High River under Roman Catholic management, and Treaty Six at North Battleford under Anglican management.

A combined program of federal Indian education and a Roman Catholic missionary instruction was put into effect by Father Joseph Hugonnard, O.M.I., at Qu'appelle Industrial School in order to teach the 'savages' the 'arts and industries of civilization' - a joint venture of church and government. These schools were government-assisted and managed by certain denominations, (Roman Catholic, Anglican, and later Methodist and Presbyterian), located off the reserve yet close to 'civilization', had an all-inclusive English language program [2], and a trades and agricultural program.

During the 1880's and 90's, the government's means of economizing during the depression was by cutting grants to all Indian schools, therefore the educational systems under-took child labor for the sake of the economy. Now the industrial schools were replaced by the residential schools:

---

[2] Yet a great deal of the spoken language amongst, particularly the Catholic staff, was French

> Just as they had arbitrarily begun and run industrial schools in the old N.W.Territories without consulting Indian parents, after 1896 Indian Department officials promoted the end of that school system and the development of the residential school system in its place ( Gresko, 1975:173).

In the early 1900's, it became evident to the missionaries and to Indian Affairs officials that despite laws introduced to stop the sundance and/any social gatherings which may otherwise lead to pan-reserve political action, Indians continued their dancing. Therefore, Indian people who violated Section 114 of the Indian Act which forbade dancing, were prosecuted. According to Gresko, the greatest factor in the demise of the industrial schools was the Indian resistance to the assimilative thrust of educational programs and the persistence of traditional social gatherings and religious ceremonies, especially the annual sundance.

Indian Affairs Commissioner David Laird, in December of 1903, forwarded a letter to Ottawa, written by Father Hugonnard regarding the evils connected with dancing, particularly on the ex-pupils of industrial schools, with supporting statements from Roman Catholic Archbishop of Boniface, Methodists Dr.Sutherland and James F. Woodsworth[3], Principal T. Ferrier of Brandon Industrial School, and Presbyterian Thomas Hart. Father Hugonnard, who had consistently complained for years regarding the adverse effects that dancing had on his ex-pupils, had written to Laird in March of 1903 that Indians should be punished more severely rather than merely arresting and releasing them "...as they consider this (release) as a victory over the N.W.M.P. and government authorities" (Vallery, 1942 cited in Persson, 1980).

But there were also expressed changes of objectives for Indian schooling through these years. According to H.J. Vallery, in 1909 the Indian Affairs Branch Superintendent of Education, Duncan Campbell Scott, described one such shift in objectives as follows:

---

[3] J.F.Woodsworth was principal at Edmonton Residential (Public) School during the time Harold W. McGill was Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs.

> The government and the churches have abandoned, to a large extent, previous policies which attempted to "Canadianize" the Indians. Through a process of vocational, and to a smaller extent academic training, they are now attempting to make good Indians, rather than poor mixtures of Indians and whites. While the ideal is still Christian citizenship, the government now hopes to move towards this end by continuing to segregate the Indian population, in large measure from the white races (Vallery, 1942).

In 1923, the government adopted the policy of maintaining all capital costs of schooling, thus enabling improved instruction, supervision, administration and management on the part of the church. The teaching staff became civil servants, but they continued to usually be uncertified, and still felt that their first allegiance was to their religious affiliation (Upton 1973).

Day schools had been provided for native children in the late 1800's, but due to lack of interest, these schools ceased to operate. Residential and industrial/residential schools followed this, but after the baby boom following World War II, native children again attended day schools. Residential schools went out of favour at the same time, the 1951 Indian Act changes establishing a direction in schooling which would result in most Indian residential schools being closed by 1970.

Thus, for over three hundred years, two of Canada's major institutions, the church and the government engaged in formal educational and missionary work among Indians. Indian policy has always been geared towards assimilation of native people into the dominant society and schooling was seen as simply a part of that process. In fact, according to a 1930 Indian Affairs document, the educational institution was the prime source of civilizing, educating, and Christianizing native people.[4] The policy of "protection, civilization and assimilation" were recommended and

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[4]Also see Sir John A. MacDonalds 1885 Indian policy as documented by E.R. Daniels in 1973.

put into effect. For most of that time period, residential schools were the main mechanism for implementing this policy so the Indian experience of schooling was an experience of residential schools.

What kind of experiences were these likely to be for these children? Although there are a number of studies which address this directly, until recently by anthropologists, it is also possible to get some idea of what this schooling was like by analyzing the cultures of the two groups: Indians and Europeans. An exhaustive analysis of this nature is beyond the scope of this work; rather in the following I will contrast the value systems especially as they relate to authority systems and images of children.

### Indian Traditional/Historical Values and Children

A number of sources are available to give us some information on historical cultural patterns among Indian peoples of North America. The following relies heavily on Eleanor Leacock's (1981) description and analsysis of La Jeune's writings, supplemented by Benedict(1948), Bennett (1968) and Sindell (1968). As Le Jeune, a Jesuit missionary, based his writings on living with a Montagnais band in the winter of 1633-34, Leacock's work has the advantage of drawing on writings at very early stages of Indian/European contact, before the fur-trade had changed the basic economy or people had been greatly influenced by European institutions. The work refers specifically to the Montagnais, an Algonkian linguistic group who are both linguistically and culturally related to the Cree of Alberta.

Leacock observes that personal autonomy for every individual was central to the organization of Algonkian-speaking people, rather than obedience to a leader. The lack of hierarchy "troubled" the French who urged these native people "to appoint leaders and to put wives firmly under their husbands' control." Within the Montagnais group, the social ethic called for generosity, cooperation and patience. Daily life entailed good humor, lack of jealousy and a willingness to help. If a person did not contribute, s/he was not respected. It was very much an insult to call a person "stingy".

There were no "leaders" per se but Le Jeune referred to men of influence and rhetorical ability as " chiefs". These men held no formal power and this was a situation that the Jesuits tried to change by introducing formal elections. Le Jeune hoped that if the wanderings of the 'savages' could be stopped and authority given to one of them to "rule" the others, they would become converted and civilized in a short time. He also noted that they did not have political organization, offices, dignities, authority but that they obeyed their leader through good will toward him.

The principle of autonomy apparently extended to relations between men and women. Le Jeune viewed women as holding "great power" and having "in nearly every instance.....the choice of plans, of undertakings, of journeys, of winterings" (Leacock, 1981:35). The Jesuits considered this independence of women a 'problem' and lectured to the men about 'allowing' their wives freedom and thus introduced European principles of obedience.

The view that the hard work done by native American women made them slaves was commonly expressed by European observers who did not know them personally nor view them contextually. In contrast, La Jeune noted the ease of relations between men and women and that women knew what they did and men never meddled in their work. Women managed household affairs without any interference from the men. Even if men supplied the provisions and they were fast disappearing, they did not question the women as to their decisions in giving away as they pleased.

This description of relations between men and women is supported by Burgess (1944) who notes that in terms of relations between men and women, under the Montagnais economic system each sex had its own duties to perform, within certain limits; divisions of labor were nonetheless, not rigid. It was not considered beneath a man's dignity to perform his wife's duties and vice versa. Marriage was considered a union of co-equal partners for mutual benefits, therefore it was the duty of both the husband and wife to assist in the performance of each other's labors.

In adult discussions, matters of importance were discussed with consideration and the patience of listening intently as others spoke, but never with interruption or all talking at once. Leadership fell to those individuals who were the most knowledgeable about specific situations. "Also", LaJeune noted, "as they are contented with a mere living, not one of them gives himself to the Devil to acquire wealth." (Leacock, 1981:35).

In terms of children, a general loving attitude toward all children prevailed, not just for one's own, but love for all the children of the tribe. An orphan or an adopted child was not in any way mistreated or set apart by the family, but was gratefully taken in and cherished.[5],[6] Indian people have been noted to accord unquestioned acceptance of and respect for each individual irrespective of age or sex, not only for their abilities but considerable tolerance as well for their weaknessess.

"Ascribed" status or status that a person may be born into other than by age or sex were non-existent among Indian people and among hunters. "Achieved" status is not even held beyond the period of demonstrated ability through actual performance. This applies also to Australian

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[5]I came across some documentation with regards to this type of Indian attitude and behavior in an archival microfilm on Sacred Heart School of the Peigan Reserve in southern Alberta, explaining how a Cree orphan was 'admitted' to the Anglican Residential school. The Council from this reserve were insistent upon accepting this child into their band membership. In fact, these Indian people demanded that Indian Affairs take this child into their Band even before she was admitted to the school (Public Archives of Canada,Ottawa, RG10).

[6] The concept of the sharing and caring of children other than one's own between the different cultural groups can be seen in the following example: A French drummer boy hit a Montagnais boy with this drumstick, causing him to bleed. The Indian onlookers became offended and stated that it was their custom to offer gifts in making amends for such an action, and therefore requested payment for the wounding of one of their children. The French interpreter replied that it was their custom to punish anyone who had done wrong and therefore the drummer boy would be whipped in their presence. When the Indians saw that the French were going ahead with the punishment, the Indians intervened by claiming that he was only a child and therefore did not know what he was doing. The French proceeded to whip their boy. One of the Indians stripped himself, threw his blanket over the boy, placed himself between the boy and his disciplinarians and exclaimed that he be whipped, but the boy shall not be whipped. In essence, he was willing to take on the punishment in place of the boy's. The boy escaped.(E. Leacock,1981:60, based on LaJeune)

aborigines with the exception of achieving a more automatic additional measure of respect with advancing age (Leacock, 1981).

The fact that Indian people did not practise corporal punishment on their children posed a stumbling-block for the Jesuits. One of Le Jeune's complaints was the fact that parents would not tolerate punishment on their children, that they permitted only a single reprimand, therefore he proposed to remove the children away from their communities - for the purpose of educating them "...because these Barbarians cannot bear to have their children punished, even scolded, not being able to refuse anything to a crying child" (Leacock, 1981:47).

Le Jeune's was concerned that these "Savages" would take their children away from them (the proposed educational system) before they became educated. Consequently his program promoted a great deal of liberty initially, as the children would become so accustomed to their food and clothes that "they will have a horror of the Savages and their filth" (quoted in Leacock, 1981:46).

This is the state of affairs that Le Jeune sought to change. He reported to his superiors in France about a four-fold program for civilizing the Indian people.

1) He saw permanent settlement and the institution of "formally recognized chiefly authority" as basic,

2) He stressed the necessity of introducing the principle of punishment into their social relations,

3) Educating the Indian children was central to his program. The process of educating Indian children in Quebec rather than sending them to France was necessary.

4) The fundamental point of Le Jeune's program was the "introduction of European family structure, with male authority, female fidelity, and the elimination of the right to divorce" (emphasis, added).

Le Jeune claimed that in France, men were the masters and that women did not rule their husbands. Indian women's independence posed continual problems and barriers for the Jesuits. The Jesuits could not "allow" Indian women "to be". Therefore Le Jeune decided to teach girls as well as boys for if boys were taught the knowledge of God and married "savage" girls, these women would compel their husbands to fall back into "barbarism" or leave them, which was considered another evil full of danger.

The account given by Le Jeune of his problems, successes and failures in the introduction of hierarchical principles to interpersonal relationships of native people, clearly depicts the personal autonomy that was central to the structure and ethics of Indian society and which was applied fully to women as well as to men. But it also suggests that considerable autonomy was granted to children, and this posed a problem which LaJeune had to address in his educational programming.

### European Traditional/Historical Values and Children

Attitudes towards children and authority were much different in European cultures, as LaJeune implies by the judgements he passes on the Montagnais. Rooke and Schnell(1983) document these attitudes amongst the English in 19th century Europe, a time which coincides with the extension of schooling to Indians by English speaking missionary groups.

Britain's ideology of the day with regard to the development of the concept (or lack of it) of childhood, is that which diffused to Canada (British North America) along with the juvenile immigration movement between 1869 - 1930. Approximately 80,000 children constituted this movement which classified them as dependents or living outside their natural family environments, and excluded those classified as delinquents. As far as these dependent children were concerned, the interest of middle class reformers lay in socializing and training them in their character formation and social behavior. The institutions set-up were predominantly Protestant or public.

According to Rooke and Schnell, the concept of modern childhood is defined by four major criteria: dependence, protection, segregation, and delayed responsibilities. The concept of childhood denoted "child rescue". Action was taken to protect children from physical dangers and moral contamination, and segregate them from the perceived vicious influences of adult life thus extending their period of dependence. Separation, protection and dependence resulted in an increasing delay of responsibilities.

The concept also implied rescue and restraint for those children whose parents could/did not provide the required protection. The discovery of childhood (Aries, 1962) was not merely a social transformation but more so a victory of a concept that radically changed the mentality of Western society. Nevertheless, as late as the early 1900's some children were denied a childhood. At this time 'child-saving' became a middle class mentality. Social groups from which children were denied a childhood were identified as the poor, the low orders, the "dangerous and perishing" classes, and the common people. Their children were classed as independent, not segregated, exposed to drink, crime, neglect, and hard labor and responsibilities were imposed on them early in life. In order to make their childhood normal, their lifestyles had to be altered drastically.

Reformers created institutions/refuges, asylums and orphanages for children without parents or with unfit parents who were to be referred later to adoptive or foster parents. For children who were considered as acting beyond the norms of normal childhood activities, delinquent reformatories and juvenile courts and laws were established. For normal children with parents, common schools were the means of including all children in this middle class concept of children. Through this process, the middle class mentality manifested itself in social reality.

It was with this ideology that 'institutions' originated in Great Britain, to be implemented for the worthy poor, and it was with this same type of ideology that native people were institutionalized in British North America, and later western Canada. However, in connection with this recently employed ideology, it must be noted that the further one goes back

in European history, the lower the level of child care, the more likely children were to be killed, abandoned, beaten, terrorized and sexually abused.

Aries (1962) notes that, according to DeMause the primary obligation of the European child in the 17th and 18th Century, was that of obedience to his parents (emphasis added). In general, it might be said that children were prized as 'providential accidents', but that they came into the world via 'original sin', displaying 'natural depravity'. John Robinson, the Pilgrim teacher, said in an essay on children:

> Surely there is in all children (tho' not alike) a stubbernes and stoutnes of minde arising from naturall pride which must in the first place be broken and beaten down so the foundation of their education being laid in humilitie and tractableness other virutes may in time be built theron'(Quoted in The Chain, Six Nations, c1979:7).

Children were to be seen and not "hearde", and not seen too much, either! In some households they were made to stand through meals, eating whatever was handed to them. They were taught it was sinful to complain about food, clothing or their lot in life.Courtesy of a formal sort was insisted upon. Corporal punishment seems to have been liberally employed...Thus the effort was made to break the will of the children and keep them in subjection at home and in school. But discipline was not left entirely to the home and school. Stern laws were enacted requiring strict obedience and fixing severe penalties for violation...(The Chain: op cit).

**Studies of Indian Schooling**

Given these differences between the two cultures, what kinds of experiences are reported for Indian children in schools? A number of studies give us some insight into this world, for example King (1967), Wolcott (1967), Bennett (1968), Sindell (1968), Willis (1973), Toohey (1977), Perrson (1980), Sluman and Goodwill(1982), Grant (1984) Haig-Brown (1988), and Johnston (1989). The following is a brief presentation of the views in these studies, relying heavily on Sindell.

In Sindell's study, done in Mistassini Quebec in the 1960's, prior to formalized schooling Cree children had no or very little interaction with Euro-Canadians. Pre-school children had clearly traditional models for identification such as parents, grandparents, elder siblings, and other kinship, be they real or fictive[7]. Children were rewarded for conforming to traditional values. However, on their return home from school, these students spoke English and displayed white-oriented attitudes and behavioral patterns.

Children who resided within these educational institutions experienced extreme cultural discontinuities. Some initial discontinuities upon entering school were as follows: learning to speak a foreign language, food, rules, a whole new pattern to adopt and adapt to in terms of life in an institutional setting. Serious academic problems resulted from linguistic complications. Despite the fact that conversational English was grasped fairly quickly, difficulties were encountered in reading, comprehension and more subtle areas of word meaning .

There was no contact with Cree-speaking people for l0 to ll l/2 months or so of each year, therefore the children's Cree language development was disrupted by their having been placed in residential schools. Older students spoke Cree amongst themselves away from the classrooms, but there were few occasions to practise their English.[8]

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[7]"Fictive" kin is a relationship established between two people who are not related biologically or by marriage. For example, an old woman may identify or recognize some trait or characteristic within a complete stranger, possibly a much younger girl. This girl may remind her of some past relative such as a mother. Therefore, due to this identification, the old woman will draw out this girl and adopt her as her "mother" and may possibly present her with gifts and money. This young girl then becomes the "mother" to this old woman and will thus be addressed with the same term that the old woman may have used in addressing her own mother while she had been living. Thus, a relationship is established with a sense of responsibility and obligation attached to it. This is the Indian way of establishing "fictive" kin and they are just as important as those kinfolk who are attached by blood lines (personal cultural knowledge).

[8] In my opinion this is a classic example of "blaming the victim" (Ryan, 1976) in which, first of all, the native children were not allowed to speak in the only language they knew, but neither were they allowed to 'practise' the language that was being supposedly taught to them. Focus is placed on the individual with a genuine concern, a typical feature of this syndrome, detracting from the basic causes and leaving the primary social injustice

What is missing in this research is the fact that the strict regimentation and/ regulations of these religiously-operated schools staffed by nuns and priests or other pious-oriented staff, literally believed and practised their strict religious dogma on the native children (Sluman and Goodwill, 1982:98) thereby resulting in a 'complete obedience' to 'authority.' This ideology can be traced back to Europe's (Britain) concept of 'childhood.' "Children were to be seen and not heard" (Six Nations, c1979).

Differences in the types of food was another problem faced by native students in residential schools. Not only does food affect the health and minds of people in general, but the meager or insufficient supply to sustain one's system can act as a deterrent to one's capability to perform.

Aside from the strict regimentation of eating meals at specified times during the day and the meagre amounts, was also the silence to be observed at all times. Children were really seen and not heard! Total silence meant complete obedience at all times and vice versa. It was with great difficulty that native children learned the English language, especially in schools operated by the Roman Catholic denomination who themselves, were French-speaking.[9]

Rules, regulations and policies imposed upon native children were a greater problem because of the difficulty of communicating them across the language barrier. In addition, within the Cree culture, children who otherwise were encouraged to be self-reliant and independent

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untouched. The remedy that is proposed focusses on the victim. Ways and means are prescribed to change him but nothing is done about the circumstances. The syndrome dictates that he change his attitudes and values, and uplift his cultural deficits and character defects and that he be trained away from his savageness.

[9] Upon reflection one must notice the double-standard imposed upon these native students who were not allowed to speak their mother tongue while under the same time these same 'teachers', 'preachers', etc. spoke the language, French, of their choosing, the language which was more familiar to them and yet was not the language to be learned in school. Many Roman Catholic 'inmates' unconciously adopted the French pronunciation and applied it to the spoken Cree language. This is an insult to the Cree language, but was definitely not the fault of the children.

(Sindell,1968; Bennett, 1968), while in the institution 'have to' conform to definite boundaries, restrictions, and to authority figures. On the other hand, government policy was aimed at assimilating Indian people via 'educating' them at residential schools, literally keeping native students far enough away and for a lengthy duration from their homes in order to 'civilize' and 'Christianize' them.

During this acculturative process, native students were mixed with students of other native linguistic groups as a means of accelerating this 'process.' This was a way of obliterating their own language and ensuring that they spoke only English. What in essence resulted instead was, an increase of the Indian's mobility (later on in life) and contacts with other Indian groups, therefore a common sense of identity. As a result, a resurgence for identity and cultural survival evolved out of this educational experience (Gresko,1975).

**Concluding Comments**

It is apparent from these brief descriptions of Indian/European values and orientation to children that the two groups had much different expectations of children and that they used different processes of socialization. It would not be surprising then, if schooling provided by Euro-Canadians for Indian children proved highly problematic. In the next two chapters I will present archival information, in which the actual providers of Indian schooling (Roman Catholic and Methodist clergy and laypersons) describe their efforts to school Indians and their beliefs about the place of religion and culture in that schooling process.

## III: Archival Information, Schools

This chapter presents reports derived from two archival sources. The first is a brief memorandum from a convention of Catholic principals of Indian residential schools, held in Saskatchewan in 1924 (Author Unknown, 1924). The second is the report of a commission, appointed by the Board of Home Missions and the Women's Society of the United Church of Canada in 1935 (Board of Home Mission, 1935). Their task was to survey Indian education by way of school visitations and interviews. Although there are differences in these documents, they do provide a picture of how residential schools were seen by people within each of the churches.

### The Roman Catholic Convention, 1924

The objective of the meeting of Catholic principals was "to unify the methods of administration of these schools; to improve...primary and industrial education of the children entrusted to them; to get better acquainted with the intentions of Department of Indian Affairs at Ottawa, and to cooperate more efficiently therewith." The memo goes on to "wire greetings" to the officers of the Department of Indian Affairs in Ottawa, "wishing...to recognize not only their devotedness and unquestionable impartiality, but also the sympathy and encouragement received from them..."

In addition, they report that "the members of the Convention have successfully attended to:

1. the administration of the schools,
2. the education of the children,
3. the sanitary conditions..."

Item no. 5 in the report recognizes some advantages resulting from inspections made of Indian schools by Inspectors of public schools, but Inspectors were asked to "respect our books and programs, and take into consideration the difficulties attendant on the education of Indian children; difficulties resulting from a "defectuous start" in bringing them up, from a very "characteristic apathy", as well as from "precarious health".

Item No. 6 states the "...resolutions on Indian education [would be] incomplete, without thanking the Department for the sum of $1,000 placed at our disposal, for the erection of a momument to the late Reverend Father Hugonnard, O.M.I., a pioneer in Indian educational work." The conference participants are " ...pleased... that steps...are being taken to erect this momunent at Lebret within the next year."

In their closing remarks, "the members of the Convention wish to recognize and highly praise the great work accomplished by our Canadian government for the civilization of our Indians". However, a further statement is made with respect to the place of the church. "In making appeal to the different churches in its work of civilization, the Dominion of Canada has recognized that all true civilization must first be based on a moral law, which the Christian religion alone can give. Pagan superstitions could not - whatsoever certain philanthropists might think - suffice to make Indians practise the virtues of our civilization and avoid its attendant vices."

The memo continues by stating that several people have wanted them (the priests) to "countenance" and observe their [Indian] dances and festivals, but the fact is that "their habits,...the result of a free and easy mode of living, cannot conform to the intense struggle for life which our social conditions require. This has to be kept in mind for the training of new generations."

The participants suggest the establishing of a MUSEUM/ HISTORICAL AND SCIENTIFIC EXPOSITION with "articles pertaining to morals, religion, industries, works of primitive tribes - the memory of which is soon lost - (for then it) could also be seen the results obtained both on the reserves from Agents' activities and in the schools of any denomination." This established museum would "encourage and perpetuate one of the best works in the Dominion of Canada."

The memorandum was signed by 23 priests[1] present at this Convention, "with the assurance of their earnest desires for the development and success of the noble work undertaken by the Canadian government" (emphasis, added throughout).

## A United Church Commission, 1935

The second commission appointed in 1935, was appointed by United Church bodies to survey Indian education. At that time there were 13 residential schools operated by the United Church of Canada (Board of Home Missions) in Canada. Two of them were in Alberta - one in Morley and one in Edmonton, Alberta. United Church Indian Day schools numbered 40, nationwide with none in Alberta at this date. The commission reported that approximately 20,000 Indians, and approximately 4,400 children were under the care of the United Church.

In outlining the task, Indian education is referred to an "important task" in which "the Church administers about $250,000 of Government grants and $50,000 of missionary money." The report refers to these Indians as ranking in development "from the Caughnawagas, on the outskirts of Montreal, who should be enfranchised, to the bush Cree in northern Manitoba, just graduating from the teepee."

The method of investigation involved interviewing all concerned, from staff of the Department of Indian Affairs to staff of the residential schools, to ministers and missionaries on reserves, graduates and those who never attended school, parents, Chiefs, Councillors, and elders. Students who were approached were interviewed without the presence of any staff member. This cooperation enabled the Commission to "get at the real facts of Indian education."

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[1] One of the signers, Reverend V. Gabillon, O.M.I.,was the Acting Principal, of Sacred Heart, Alberta, the precursor of Blue Quills Indian Residential School and one of the schools attended by elders interviewed for this study.

The problem being investigated is described as "problems of Indian education having to do with the development of personality - (and) may be included in answer to such simple queries as, From what? To what? By what?"

Under the heading "From what?" the report states that the Indian child comes from the reserve in which, along with his parents, he is a ward of both the government and the church, that his life is necessarily circumscribed, entering his quest for education handicapped by an inferiority complex which is part of his inheritance (emphasis, added).

The report further claims that a majority entered school "seriously handicapped by an inadequate knowledge of English, and so far as we could judge, by an I.Q. which is said to average 70 - 80." But the writer adds, as a caveat to this description, that "...it must be remembered, of course, that this is a white man's I.Q. and does not take into account the superior training of eyes and ears, the natural deftness of fingers, and superior intuitiveness along certain lines, of Indian children." Nevertheless, the conclusion that the Commission was "forced" to make was that Indian children across the country, on the whole, in terms of normal intellectual development, are about two years behind children in white schools.

The nomadic lifestyle of Indian people was viewed as "an almost insuperable obstacle in the way of educational progress." In addition, the purely paternalistic type of government and church administration which has characterized so much of their contact with Indian children and persisted in treating adults as children, had also developed a psychological "mindset" on many Indian students thus inhibiting advancement.

The heading "To What?" states that "The ultimate aim may be stated as Christian citizenship - an ideal that looks forward to the abolition of the Reserves, with their restrictions, and the mingling of our Indian people in fullness of personality and privilege among other Canadian citizens...the Church and the Government should get together on a survey of the possiblity of a process of gradual enfranchisement."

This ideal (of assimilation) was to have been kept in mind when "it comes to the determination of the curriculum of Residential schools." The report continued by stating that "the larger part of the problem" studied, composed of helping "95% to become healthful, capable, cultured, Christian people - preparatory to a wider mingling and cooperation in the full status of citizenship which will be reached by many of their children."

According to the heading of "By What?", in preparing the Indians for citizenship, the problem was, at the time, one of economics. Therefore, it was argued that no progress from the government or church would ever be successful, if it did not provide a more adequate and substantial foundation for Indian life, than currently obtained. Although this was not part of the problem committed for this study, economics did appear in several sections as being an important aspect that would assist in the development of the Canadian Indian.

The report documented three methods used in educating Indian children:

1) the day schools,
2) improved day school system, and
3) the residential school.

It was interesting to note that, according to this Commission, disadvantages of having Indian children attend the Improved Day School system, outnumbered the advantages on a ratio of 4 to 1. One of the "studied convictions" stated by "the most experienced Inspector after 40 years of service", was that the Indian day school was "the most effective means yet devised of preventing an Indian child from obtaining an education." The implication was that the residential school system was preferable.

In terms of the residential school system, the Commission stated that "properly officered, the Residential School on the reserve has nearly all the

advantages."[2] The report states twelve advantages of the residential school system, compared to six disadvantages.

Only some advantages are selected for this work, the first one being the improvement of health. For example, "Residential schools are front-line trenches in the warfare on Indian diseases, and must be given considerable credit if the race is increasing in numbers, the Residential School is the key to the solution of the problems of Indian health" (emph., added).

Under academic advancement, in residential school "inevitably, the child makes greater progress in academic studies." Credit is given to the "highly trained" teachers, regular and consistent attendance even though nearly all Residential Schools run on the half day system. A comparison is made to those students who attend Day Schools, where students are rarely found in grades 7/8 and there are few beyond grade four. Special vocational training is also provided (although the report does not state what it is) and wider social contacts available are broadening and stimulating.

Another advantage is that the Residential School provides opportunity for discipline in habits of regularity, punctuality and accuracy, "which, having regard to the normal background of the Indian child, can scarcely be over- estimated."

In advantage no. 9 the commission "unanimously endorsed the opinion" that the Residential School was "the most potent factor" in the development of, for example, B.C. Indian villages, resulting by the example set by the residential school, of "well constructed, decently furnished, properly kept,...and...a pardonable pride in the appearance of the village as a whole". In fact, a comparison was made at this point, of the villages who boycotted the Residential School, and whose houses were "ill-

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[2] Here, as elsewhere, the advantages of having Indian children be 'maintained' (and educated) within the residential school system overruled the criticisms, therefore directing us to the reality of who is critiquing the system.

kept and in poor repair; where the ownership is largely lacking; and where the whole moral tone of the community is decidedly lower."

In describing another advantage the commissioners remarked that "one must not forget the rapid transition which the Indian has been forced to make by the onrush of white civilization. No other race in history has been forced to jump from the Stone Age to the Machine Age in 150 years." This is further complicated, according to the United Church of Canada, by the "sheer weight of the superior numbers of their conquerors, (emphasis, added) the lack of leadership, the variety of Indian languages, and the diversity of customs and occupations represented."

The statement goes on to say that upon graduation, the student returns to the reserve "dominated by the ideal of communal life and where the word of the elders is still law" (emph. added). It states that the full impact of residential school upon reserve life will not be felt unless grandparents are themselves graduates. In addition to this, is "the characteristic of the Indian which makes him timid in expressing his ideas for fear of being laughed at."

According to the Commission, as stated in advantage no. ll, except for one, "all graduates interviewed expressed a desire to have their children educated in a Residential School." When asked what they considered the greatest value in the training received, the reply was "almost always - discipline. "This free expression of opinion" especially where Day School facilities were available, placed "very great weight" (on their judgements).

Some of the disadvantages cited were as follows:

1) It is costly to the Department of Indian Affairs ("in reality to the people of Canada") and the church.
2) Children are taken away from their homes at an early age permitting them to return only occasionally for holidays until their course is completed, about ten years later. "This naturally breaks the tie between the child and his parents at a

critical time in his life and denies to each the affection and discipline so much to be desired" (emphasis, added).

3) Children are fed, clothed, housed, cared for in sickness and in health, and educated at the expense of the Government and the church. In receiving everything free, they have no way of learning the value of these things. As a result, they inevitably develop an attitude of dependence, so upon returning to the "normal social and economic life of the Reserve, they readily become baffled, discouraged and shiftless."

4) The school confines boys and girls "with its discipline, restrictions, and 24-hour-a-day supervision" resulting in graduates who are unfit for community life on the reserve. One missionary (from the Prairies) stated that he had been receiving graduates from three different residential schools and "there was not one of them who had not been in jail." In fact, according to Department officials, it was useless to try to do anything with students within two or three years after graduation, since with the restraint suddenly relaxed, "there was inevitably a period of sowing wild oats."

5. Indian parents also felt that the long period away from reserve life resulted in unfit children for the life of trapping, fishing, farming, etc.

6. Compulsory attendance at chapel and other religious services lead "to a rather violent reaction after graduation." Graduates become indifferent or are hostile to the church.

There was a small survey done of Brandon students who "had been discharged" since 1931.[3] Although the survey claims that it may refute some of the criticisms contained in the preceding section on advantages, it does show that "certain undesirable results" of the Residential School are by no means, inevitable. For example, of the 87 students who went "off the list" during the time of the review, 26 went off irregularly as follows:

4 died in the school,

14 left due to ill health, 8 of whom since died,

7 were let out due to misconduct,

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[3]The Commission regrets its inability to secure such statistics from other schools and suggests that one of its first tasks to be undertaken is a survey of the graduates of all Indian Residential Schools, with a case history of those who are exceptional - either as successes or failures.

l transferred to a R.C. school because his father changed religions.

There was a note made that if one were to leave out of account the 25 who returned to the reserve, the other 27 who continued their education in some form, were regarded favorably, "in receipt of good reports" by the Principal. This provided an encouraging demonstration of the efficiency of this type of Indian education.

The Commission also observed that upon contact with all types of Indians, only very few, with the exception of the Residential School graduates, were thinking in terms of the kinds of contributions they could make to the life of the reserve or to the local church. The majority interviewed thought exclusively in terms of what the Church and Government could do for them.

Section VII of this report deals with "Appraisal (Plant, Curriculum)", and in it the commission stated that the "present policy of discharging pupils from Residential Schools at l6 years of age is suicidal"(emph.added). It would be more beneficial to retain students until l8 years, "to capitalize upon the teaching and training already given." Furthermore, they are "two years behind white children in academic development and in their general conception of problems of life." Therefore, a great deal more could be accomplished "not only in the way of education, but in the equally important realm of character building."

In terms of Day Schools, there was a success story reported on the Sarcee Reserve. Fifteen or twenty years ago, "these Indians were regarded as the most backward, reactionary and immoral group in the Plains." In fact, at the time of the Commission, "the plant" consisted of "a school-room, a...hospital unit, a kitchen and dining room...a church, Agent's office, and residences for the ordained missionary-teacher of the Anglican Church, the Agent, who is a Doctor, and the Farm Instructor."

In spite of its support of the residential school, the Commission stated that the United Church would welcome the opportunity to test the efficiency of the Day School on "one or two carefully selected Reserves for

which they are responsible and thinks that our whole organization should throw the full weight of its influence and its most enthusiastic support behind such projects." Emphasis, at this point was placed on "the absolute importance of compulsory and regular school attendance." In addition, "Degrading dances and other demoralizing customs should be suppressed as they prevent the progress of the pupils"(emph. added).

It is most interesting to note that the qualifications of Day School teachers are as follows, although the commission claimed that their success "depends almost entirely upon the personality of the teacher":

1. Missionary-mindedness.
2. Full academic qualifications and experience.
3. Knowledge of First Aid and Home Nursing, with special training in the treatment of Trachoma and the prevention of T.B.
4. A sufficient education in music to lead and teach singing, both in the School and community, and a leader in group games which promote health and community enjoyment.
5. Elementary Household Science, with some knowledge of gardening and floriculture.
6. Where there are two teachers in a Day School, one of them should be a man with enough knowledge of Manual Training to give the boys elementary instruction in the use of tools and the handling of ordinary farm machinery(emph.added).

In referring to the Residential School, the Commission goes on to state that since there is not much hope that the "ideal policy advocated above can be achieved in less than a generation the Residential School will therefore necessarily have to carry most of the burden of educating Indian children (emph.added).

Upon inspecting physical plants, the Commission was greatly impressed by the Anglican and Roman Catholic chapels, which were lacking in the United Church schools. Here they stated that "taking part in a religious service is an important aid in the whole programme of character building - which is the fundamental purpose of the school."

The Commission reported on an intensive and detailed study of the Curriculum that was followed in Residential Schools. Academic studies used in Public and Separate Schools of various provinces are geared to meet the needs of "children...of our white civilization," and in the light of the present economic and social standards. "Lacking the English language, the physical stamina and the cultural background, Indian boys and girls are retarded in early school grades." Therefore recommendations were made regarding a "special course of study for Indian schools," at least the first two years, at which time the teaching staff would be in a position "to determine with a fair degree of accuracy what pupils have the physical and intellectual strength and the home encouragement necessary to take the regular Public School course of study through Grades three to six."

**Other Notes from Archives**

In the historical documentation of the Lac Ste. Anne Mission (1859-1863) written by the Grey Nuns, they described themselves as "invaluable companions for the priests in their work of mercy and their practise of complete charity." In fact, the following portrays the French perspective of the type of work entailed in the establishing of a mission in the Northwest (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia and the Northwest Territories).

> La femme est éminement apte au ministère de la charité.... Ces saintes filles apparurent comme des visions du ciel à ces pauvres femmes savages dont elle catéchisaient l'ignorance. (Grey Nuns, c1978:2)

It was interesting to note that during this initial period when the Grey Nuns were beginning their missionization process they "took an hour of Cree lessons from Father Lacombe" (op cit: 3). [4] The concept of "inmate" was used with reference to Indian students as late as 1947 in these documents

[4] There was also documentation in this archival source about the beginning of the extiction of the buffalo. "....these great animals were doomed to extinction becau;se of the white man's insatiable greed for their valuable hides" (Grey Nuns, c1978, citing Jonquet).

In addition, according to the "Report of the Mission of the Sacred Heart" in Saddle Lake (Provincial Archives of Alberta) Rev. Father Balter began a monthly journal of "The Sacred Heart", called The Indian Missionary in 1900. Some years later the Indian Mission Record began to be published at Qu'Appelle Indian School in Lebret, Saskatchewan. It was published in Cree, Saulteaux and Sioux and lithographed in syllabic for the benefit of the Indians. In tthe issue published in January of 1938 there was an article by Rev. A. Josse, entitled "Ka Nipa Ayamihak" (which translates as the night of praying in English). This article was written as a means of informing the Cree peope of the Christmas story, written in Cree Syllabics and Roman orthography by a member of the O.M.I. No cultural knowledge was transmitted via this Cree publication; any documentation transribed into Cree appeared to have been done for the purpose of teaching Christianity, usually from the Roman Catholic perspective. Other articles in issues of thie periodical described and undermined Indian culture, belief systems, rituals and the manner and custom in which Native people practised their belief in the cosmos. Therefore the learning of Cree/other Native languages was done to assist in changing "pagans" to Christians, not to maintain and support Indian culture (Josse, 1938).

**Comments on the Archival Data**

Formal analysis of these documents will not be done, as the purpose in presenting the material is simply to indicate the view held by the responsible church bodies in regards to Indian schooling. Nevertheless, it seems appropriate to make some comments, to reflect on this material, before proceeding to the interview material which presents the situation from the Indian experience. Some of these comments will incorporate findings which are documented in the following chapters; they are used here only to make it clear that there are quite different possible interpretations of the above information. Initial comments will relate to the Roman Catholic document, followed by comments on the United Church document.

When the Catholic Principal's meeting was set up to unify the methods of administrating Indian schools, nothing is stated of who "entrusted" these Indian children to the "missionary- minded" educators. A transaction had transpired without the consultation of Indian parents, but instead between the Roman Catholic clergy and the Department of Indian Affairs.

In terms of the successful aspects as stated by this memo, item no. 5 refers to the "difficulties " of Indian children "resulting from a defectuous start...from a very characteristic apathy ...precarious health." According to this statement, "difficulties" were anticipated, (that challenge is to be expected with any task) but to do so with a preconceived notion and a derogatory statement on a group of people, particularly Indian students "entrusted" to these institutions, is quite demeaning and victimizing. The teachings that were supposedly to be taught by this Christian denomination does not portray a type of Christian attitude, nor does the manner in which Indian children were viewed and described.

There is also a note in the Public Archives in Ottawa which presents a different explanation of the "precarious health" of the children, at least at one residential school. A complaint was made by a parent, corroborated by statements made by his three sons, ex-pupils of Blue Quill's Boarding School, as follows:

> That the children's food is poor and scanty; that they do not get meat regularly; that the soup provided is not made from meat: that they have eggs, (boiled/fried), only once a year, namely at Easter. (Inspector of Indian Agencies, Battleford Inspectorate, May 16, 1904)

In item no. 6.of the Roman Catholic Convention report, "$1,000" was given to erect a momument for the late Reverend Father Hugonnard. No disrespect is intended for those who passed on, but (in 1924) this amount being allotted by the Department of Indian Affairs, and "deemed necessary" is quite generous. Yet, in the United Church report, it has been considered to be "costly" to educate Indian children. It suggests that this

'donation' reflects the Department's priority of recognizing the 'great works' of one of their civil servants over the 'costly need' of institutionalizing Indian children.In the suggestion made to establish a museum, one can see the beginnings of comparing "primitive" people and the "progress of civilization."

Finally, the Convention deals completely with the administration of native schools, yet not ONE WORD is mentioned about approaching an Indian elder and/parent to enquire what their thoughts may be in the raising and teaching of their children by a foreign institution. There is no supposed consultation, not one mention of involving one parent.

The United Church Commission report begins by giving some statistics regarding the number of Indian schools in Canada operated by the U.C.C., plus a breakdown of the types of schools, location and population of native people. It was interesting to note that at this time, there were approximately 20,000 Indians, and approximately 4,400 children under the care of the United Church. This is the first mention of the care of Indian people including both the adult and child population.

A statement refers to the Indians ranking in development "from the Caughnawagas, on the outskirts of Montreal, who should be enfranchised, to the bush Cree in northern Manitoba, just graduating from the teepee." One has to 'read between the lines' the subtle comparison made as to the progress of the Indians in Eastern Canada vs. those of the West. One could also 'read' the implication of 'a' standard of measurement in terms of the influence of civilization that has reached the eastern Indians before those of the West.

The first "criticism" or disadvantage of Indian education was that it was "costly to the Department of Indian Affairs (in reality to the people of Canada) and to the church." The report does not state to which "people of Canada" it is directing its "costly reality". It would seem that it is to the dominant society, from their economic viewpoint. In addition though, we might recognize that it has been costly in terms of the 'effects' it has created within some of our Indian "inmates", psychologically speaking.

Treaties were signed in exchange for certain services ,and education was one of them. Indian people of Canada lost a great deal more than just their country; in addition, some lost their dignity, their children, and some rejected their traditional way of life plus their cultural values. At that time, education was requested as one of the services in exchange for the treaties being signed, therefore it was (is) not free, but a condition agreed upon between the Indian nations and the Government. "...Her Majesty agrees to maintain schools for instruction...whenever the Indians... shall desire it" (Treaty No. 6). No one can measure the cost in terms of dollars and cents, the effects incurred on most of our Indian people at that time, psychologically, emotionally, physically and spiritually.

As for the "period of sowing wild oats," the elders claimed it was not because the barrier had been relaxed but was a much more psychological effect, like when an 'inmate' is finally released after doing a " ten-year-stint in the pen." However, religious services, as part of the educational curriculum, led to a "rather violent reaction after graduation," is definitely a true statement, in many cases, and has resulted in native people becoming indifferent or downright hostile towards the church. Indian graduates have concluded that they were "stuffed with religion and that did more harm than good."

According to the advantages given in which the "Residential School is the key to the solution of the problems of Indian health," it is a known historical fact that Indian people's lack of immunity to European diseases such as smallpox, measles and the Spanish flu, assisted in the decimation of total communities (Dion, 1979; Dempsey, 1986; Titley, 1986, Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1986). For example, within the local area (Treaty Six), a participant in this study from Beaver Lake had his whole community wiped out from an epidemic of a disease which was not an 'Indian disease.' This statement of large numbers of deaths is supported by oral history in the Goodfish Lake community, in which it is recalled that people of that community participated in the digging of a massive burial site for people of Beaver Lake Indian Reserve (Goodfish Lake is approximately 30 miles from Beaver Lake). Also, Titley(1986) cites a

report done by P.H. Boyle, who investigated the health of Indian children in residential schools. It indicated that the defective sanitary conditions appeared to be deliberately created to ensure the outbreak of epidemics.

## IV: Archival Information, Religion and Culture

The archival sources were also reviewed for the attitudes expressed towards the Indian people's spirituality and culture. Although these sources were not always from the schools or communities focussed on in this study, they do display a belief system which seems to be consistent, indicating that Indian students who were "educated" in residential or boarding schools were attended to in similar fashion. The trend of the day was a "similar experiment" across the nation, of "molding their mind, will and heart" and of industrial schools described as follows:

> Industrial schools were more than schools of manual labour, but also "...of learning and religion" , of "...linking religious education to practical training in trades, not to contemplate anything more in respect to intellectual training than to give a plain English education adapted to the working farmer and mechanic...(to teach) mechanics so far as mechanics is connected with making and repairing...agricultural implements. The North American Indian cannot be preserved in a state of civilization except ...by the influence of...religious feelings...with him (the Indian) nothing can be done to improve and elevate his character and condition without the aid of religous feeling....This influence must be superadded to all others to make the Indian an industrious man" (emphasis added, Latour, p. 1))

Within the monthly publication of The Indian Missionary Record, edited by Rev. G.L. Laviolette, O.M.I. and published at the Qu'appelle Indian School at Lebret Saskatchewan in 1938, a definite attitude and orientation is expressed towards Indian people. For example,

> Any missionary is fully aware of the conditions facing our Indian people. I do not deny that some are so poor they cannot afford.... (emphasis added).... Like children they lack foresight. But I speak of the many Indians who are living a modern and civilized life. (Laviolette, 1938)

In the March issue, 1938, the editorial concerns itself, as it has before, with the need for a special newspaper for "our" Indian population. Four reasons are given for this need:

> First, our Indians are brought up in our schools, with the knowledge of the English language, the ideals of the white people....
> Second, it is a widespread belief that evils must be counteracted by the spreading of truth....
> Third, our Indians have not, generally speaking, a very well developed sense of culture: a bulletin...regularly distributed...might help them acquire a desire...for information...and (be) another efficacious means for the authorities to teach civics, health, sanitation, moral advice, and to suggest divers means of bettering their lives.
> Fourth, (to) create a link between parents and children... (Laviolette, 1938)

Within this publication are articles written by the clergy about aspects of Indian culture. An article titled "Indian Religion" and written by the Director of the Qu'Appelle Indian School (Reverend G.L. Laviolette) states:

> ...those who cling best to the first (primitive) Revelation are the Indians who kept a great deal of it.... (T)he necessity of morality....became overburdened with superstitious rites and magic...degenerated into bloody polytheism and lost respect for human life (and became) compromised with immorality.... Young Indians should respect their old people, pagans of the old type.... I pity the modern pagan who is godless...through immorality, laziness, selfishness, and shameful life, has lost the faith, believes no more/ throws himself back to paganism... the modern pagan is falling down, away from God, to animality (Laviolette, 1938).

This director has written a series of articles in several consecutive publications in which he analyzes Indians, Indian culture, and native spiritualism from his perspective. In Part 2 of the same publication, he continues in much the same manner.

> Indian religion...was doomed to deteriorate.... The true 'primitives' according to History, (Bible....folklore, legends) were wise and well balanced men. Indians were primitive in the last meaning. They never indulged in...elaborated civilization which, in spite of their development, were far less 'human'. The lack of scientific criticism, of scholarly logic, was dooming the ignorant through warm and religious imagination of the Red-Skins. Their knowlege of God grew more childish and crude....This unfitting way of losing the spiritual knowlege of God to yield to a human God is 'anthropomorphism' (like man). The consequence was a pagan polytheism, the worship of many Gods.... (T)he modern pagan who believes in nothing...makes himself an animal without a soul. (Laviolette, 1938)

In the following issues he further develops his analysis of Indian religion, which in its decay has become ugly and cruel, showing the influence of the devil. It is a religions "flooded with superstition", so that

> ...even our baptized Indians find it hard to get rid of the superstition of dreams, so developed among the pagans; we know that in the Bible, God sometimes used that method to speak to certain people; but commonly, dreams are a mere association of images, and their frequency is due to over-eating and hard digestion rather than to supernatural inspiration...Indians (have) innumberable superstitions. People have to laugh at their explanation of the storm and lightning produced by the four fabulous 'thunderbirds'. Any scientist will laugh for he knows better the law of Physics.... Old pagans, smoking their pipes reverently toward the four corners of the earth...believe in the supernatural, though their way is wrong and superstitious. (Laviolette, 1938)

Reports written by some nuns were positive in their initial contact with Indian children, and reflected the respect shown to them by the children. They described their warm welcome as being "received in true Indian fashion" and remarked that the children were timid, unable to speak or understand English, but smiled and touched their habits and beads with great reverance. They also documented the frequency and times of Mass...the first at 5 in the morning, at half-past six in the morning, and two or three masses every day which "strengthened us". The children were

described as having a natural taste for singing and music, "yet like all conquered nations there is a mournful tone throughout their airs."

These nuns also describe the onset of an outbreak of chickenpox. Sixteen of the girls felt sick, soon showing the chicken pox, and nearly all were ill with it. However, the disease was considered mild so "no notice was taken" and all rose for 6 a.m mass and took their places in class as if they were in perfect health. Apparently following this two students were attacked with "bad eyes" but the nuns only commented on how admirable it was "to see the kindness and attention of others to the sufferers." (Sisters of the Faithful Companions, 1896)

One nun documents the "civilizing" process expressed as religious conversion and change of cultural expectations:

> (There were) only two children who...made their first Communion...the boy dressed in a beautiful beaded coat and vest looked the type of a real civilized Indian. (Later) six girls took their First Communion, knelt at the alter dressed in white embroidered dresses with wreathes and veils, no one could take them for the poor abject creatures, wrapped in their blankets....and a little girl was baptized, the daughter of a Pagan....
>
> By the side of the Holy oils was laid a pair of scissors, as the Fathers make it obligatory for Pagan men to have their long hair cut off before Baptism. It is one of their Superstitions that the Spirits they worship dwell in these locks which they never cut but wear plaided....This is one of the greatest sacrifices they have to make and on their refusal depends whether they will be Christians or not (Sisters of the Faithful Companions, 1896).

Within this report incidents were documented which revealed a contradiction of the use of the term "savages" as the children were called, and the respect that they adhered to in the interaction between the two cultures. A sense of pride and superiority over the Indians is voiced by the nun, and the two cultures are constantly compared from her perspective. An example is given of "nearly a whole reserve of Pagans" requesting that they become "Christians (for they) no longer have any faith in the

Protestant ministers." The nun goes on to remark that the beautiful horses being driven by (herself and the priest) "could not travel at the same rate as the little shaggy ponies and oxen of the Indians. So these savages lined the road most respectfully to allow us to pass first....it was wonderful to see with what respect they behaved on the whole."

When referring to Indians, names and labels were used such as "poor" or "neophytes" and the notion of "reward" was used, as in passing out candy after baptism. But there were also priests who were genuine in their concern, at least as their view is depicted by the nun:

> ...children were starving and naked and the poor parents hoped the good Father Paquette would have pity on them As this good father's heart is larger than his house or his purse, he could not turn them away from his door (Sisters of the Faithful Companions, 1896).

Native people have been a very modest people. This is another aspect in their lives which conflicted with the practises which were imposed upon them, in this case the bathing practises. As the nun describes these practises and experiences, she cannot but comment on positive attributes of the children.

> The operation of undressing was very distasteful to them and they could scarcely be prevailed on to get into water with only a slight covering, for Indian children are timid in the extreme but morally good and we learned with gratitude to God that their is neither cursing nor swearing in their language; the worst expressions they use to one another when vexed are 'Your Grandmother is dead' or 'Your mother had bad eyes'. At this the offended party begins to cry bitterly and complains that such a one has said a bad word to her (Sisters of the Faithful Companions, 1896)

A visit of the "Mother Provincial" is described, in which she is surprised and pleased to see the ready obedience and intelligent manners of the children. The writer remarks they can no longer be called savages, as they are willing to learn but above all, willing to learn their prayers,

saying the rosary and morning prayers in French and evening prayers in Cree. But another writer describes a much different situation which had occurred earlier in these same communities, in which a priest met Indians of whom he said:

> ...these savages...are true pagans in every sense of the word. On arriving, the savages came out to meet the good Father and to his horror found men, women and children almost naked...faces painted in yellow, green and bright red...bodies tatooed...hair in long plaits down to their waists interwoven with copperwire...large brass and iron rings in their ears. The Father's man was so terrified at their appearance that he wished to turn back, but as it would not do for a whiteman to show signs of fear and distrust he was prevailed to remain to the end. Although so fierce and warline in appearance these people are now peaceable and inoffensive (Sisters of the Faithful Companions, 1896).

Nevertheless, Indian culture is not always described in such negative terms. Indian visiting customs are described, with Indians greeting their visitors and showing their joy by clapping their hands loudly and stamping their feet on the ground. "The greater the dignity of the visitor, the greater also is the noise." It is also remarked that sympathy and affection are not shown exteriorly by the Indians, and the writer wonders if these two sentiments exist among them.

There were other activities at the school; the clergy and staff "gave away" a 'daughter's' hand in marriage, to show the difference between a Christian and a Pagan rite, but no mention is made of the girl's actual parents. Children are described as happy to come back to the school after Christmas and New Years holidays, for they understand the difference in their treatment and material well-being at the school when compared to what they have in their tents. The children experience death at the school, making them anxious to die while they attend the school for then, they are sure, they will go to heaven but that is much less certain if they die at home.

It appears that at this residential school (Duck Lake, Saskatchewan) that the priest (Father Paquette) and the nuns worked in support of each other and were genuine in the raising and educating of Indian children. The priest is described as famous, not only in the northwest but in the United States, and he received a visit from the Archbishop of St Bonifice. The Bishop was pleased at the attachment the children show for the school, and commented that "...everywhere else, in our Indian schools, there are always children, who do their best to escape... " and the nun writing this document goes on to say "a remark worthy of notice, that our children have never tried to escape."

But it was not the case that only Catholic residential schools tried to impact on the children's and adult's religious beliefs. Church 'officials' /native missionaries who had become 'successful' within the Christian community (Methodist, in this case) may have influenced their church congregations to turn against, undermine and discredit Indian spiritual practices. ( It was this denomination who accepted the ordination of Indian people much earlier than did the Roman Catholic church.)

Whatever internal political conflicts there may have been within the community(ies), the following writer (in this case, an ordained Native minister, who lived in the community for many years) obviously played a role in the wording and the writing of a petition and advice given to his congregation with regards to the Councils of the Bands. A handwritten petition, written by the minister of the day dated February 22, 1940, from Saddle Lake to the Department of Indian Affairs reads as follows:

> We the undersigned members of the amalgamated Bands of Whitefish and Saddle Lake Reserves,residing in Saddle Lake Reserve, hereby make a formal challenge and protest, against minor chief [Jesse Moses] and Counsellor [James Cardinal] for incapacity, unworthiness and untrustworthiness.They certainly do not show good example and leadership as Heads of Bands. They practise sorcery, witchcraft, native dance and Sun Dance which all have a degenerate, degrading and (demoralizing) effect on the life of the Band morally, physically, and religiously.We demand that they be disposed forth-with from

this responsible position (Saddle Lake file, Provincial Archives of Alberta).

**Comments**

The documents from what appears to be a good residential school (Catholic), with caring staff, points to many of the problems of residential schooling. The belief system of traditional people clearly shows the respect they paid to newcomers, but it is apparent that the prime educational motive behind the schooling was religion, religion to civilize and transform the Indians. From a view of many decades later, and the perspective of a Cree person, many of the problems which are alluded to in the interviews in the next chapter are foreshadowed in these pages.

It appears that, in terms of sickness, it was a common practise amongst Indian Residential Schools to 'allow' children to attend classes or Mass regardless of health. Perhaps because of being Indian people whose 'sentiments' were not shown 'exteriorly', the children did not complain, or perhaps the nuns did not take their complaints seriously. Thus the educators could ignore their illness and continue "just as if they were in perfect health." Given the problems with eyesight which followed this outbreak, the nun's response seems even more inappropriate but she does not seem to make any connection between these events.[1]

The nun also makes reference to "conquered nations", and it seems that the notion of being conquered is a common misconception of both cultures. Very few of the Indian peoples were actually conquered in war; most signed treaties as independent peoples.

This document also helps us to understand the churches' peculiar beliefs about cutting hair. It was a common practise inflicted on Indians in residential schools, and according to this report it was a condition placed upon Indians which would determine whether they would be "Christians or

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[1] There are apparently seldom complications from Chickenpox, but there may be a secondary bacterial infection, especially if the ill child is weakened by malnutrition or tuberculosis, and that bacterial infection often causes conjunctivitis (inflamation of the surface tissue of the eye). It may heal without damage, but it may cause scarring and resulting impaired vision or blindness.

not." It is difficult to see a connection that allows Indians to be "Christian or not" because of the length of their hair. In fact, that was another process imposed upon students as a way of acculturating them.

One of many descriptions in this document which must be questioned, is that of influencing "pagans" who, as nearly a whole reserve, became "Christians" because they no longer had faith in their Protestant ministers. It seems that already at that time there was a rivalry between the Roman Catholic clergy and the Protestants. Calling these Indians pagans provides us with some information on this religious conflict, which had nothing to do with the original spiritual beliefs of the Indian peoples.

In terms of the experience of death, it seems that the beginnings of a dependency mentality had been created. These students want to die at the residential school, appearing to believe that the place of their death will influence whether or not they get to heaven. This is instilling a false sense of security, or a false notion, that the location of death will determine admission to heaven. In fact, this is also taking away from the traditional belief system, which will not as yet have developed in some of the students as to the meaning of death and dying.

In fact, the experience of death seems, at times, to have been "transformed" in other ways for students. One of the archival notes refers to a young girl who signed, on her deathbed, a will which stated that she would willingly give up whatever monies were supposed to go to her from her Band, to the Father (Balter) in order for him to perform masses (for the repose of her soul).The will stated she had devised it without anyone coaxing her to do so. It appeared, however, to be something which someone had persuaded her to do, for it seems unlikely that a young Indian girl of that age and time would know about wills (Saddle Lake File, Provincial Archives of Alberta).

One other comment could be made about the Reverend G.L Laviolette, and that is in response to the type of material he wrote and published, describing and undermining Indian culture. Laviolette was the editor of the INDIAN Missionary Record, published monthly at the Qu'Appelle Indian

School in Lebret, Saskatchewan. But it was not his culture he was describing, nor was it his place to judge and undermine it. Nevertheless, the material was published, circulated and archived in the same place as the principal's report used in the preceding chapter, suggesting it was an equally reputable document.

Finally, from the Protestant document, it is equally clear that Protestant missionaries had the same feelings about Native spiritual practises, even if they were themselves Indian. Indian people who had not attained nor surpassed the eighth grade, and who were barely literate, could not have had the sophistication nor the ability or knowledge to manipulate a system that was 'foreign' to them (nor the political clout of today's politicians), as is evidenced by the underhanded manner of instructing and designing of a petition to do away with their own people. They had the means of 'working out' decisions and challenges co-operatively and collectively, but the manner of this petition is questionable at the time at which it occurred. It appears to be in opposition to the traditional ways which were practised at that time.

On the other hand, the previous decade had been one in which cultural and/ spiritual events had been outlawed. During the 1920's and 30's, any person who so much as mentioned the word 'Sundance' or who was in any way a part of such an event, was thrown in jail for up to six months. Therefore, this control mechanism may have been influential in keeping "pagans" on the "straight and narrow path" of Christianity. In this sense, 'religion' was used as the control mechanism, for keeping 'pagan' Indian people passive and therefore easier to control. It seems that the "education" of Indians was directed to their souls, and it might be argued as much to the destruction of their souls as their rescue.

But we will turn now to the evidence of the elders, men and women who were willing to talk about their experience in residential schools. Does this experience justify the missionaries attempts? Were they really agencies of civilizing and Christianizing for these men and women?

## V: The interviews

### Selection of Participants and Procedures for Interviewing

Participants that were selected ranged between the ages of approximately 55 to 75 years, all were Cree-speaking with full Indian status, and originated from the Treaty Six area of what is considered Northeastern Alberta. They were mainly from the Saddle Lake, Goodfish Lake, Kehewin and Beaver Lake Reserves. All, except one, were personal acquaintances of the researcher. Because these reserves are rather small, and this generation has remained within their communities all their lives[1], it is easy to be acquainted with all the people of the community, particularly the elders. In addition, because elders are held in high esteem and considered to be the role models and spiritual adivisors within native communities, one 'has to' know them personally. Furthermore, one is expected to know kinship relationships no matter how distant and be able to relate to them as most elders will make it known to their own people how 'all' are interrelated. Therefore, in doing the interviews, there has also been a 'learning' of the 'connectedness' of Indian people even if they are separated by reserves.

One couple requested an interview by sending out 'word' via the initial informant (elder) and they turned out to be very helpful. In fact they informed me that because they had much respect and trust (for me), they felt that they must share their experiences (with me). In addition, they stated that they had been interviewed by non-Native researchers before with regard to Indian schooling, but they did not feel comfortable enough to disclose themselves to outsiders. Therefore, whatever first-hand knowledge that they held had never before been shared for the sake of documentation and was accorded to me at this time.[2] When asked if he could be acknowledged within the research, he granted his permission to do

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[1] This cohort of men and women were at the tail-end of the people who were confined to their reserves due to the dictates of a government-implemented 'permit' system.

[2] This man is a most influential, traditional and spiritual elder within the community. I felt honored that he would request an interview.

so (much thanks to him.) However, this was a challenge faced with some other elders/ informants, who did not wish to have their names revealed.

In terms of data-gathering, informal interviews were relatively unstructured using the Cree language, and the traditional modes of visitation and approach with elders was used within the home of the person being interviewed. (This was the part that was enjoyed mutually with the elders.) Similar questions were covered with each participant. Interviews usually lasted more than the couple of hours allotted. Permission was requested at the opening of the interview, to record their responses to questions asked. Initially, a tape-recorder was to have been utilized but one elder exclaimed in Cree, "My grandmother didn't use 'those things' in her lifetime." In other words, translated contextually, "I don't think I will either!"

Note-taking in shorthand was just as efficient, if not more so, than the use of a tape-recorder as it would have taken longer to transcribe tapes later. Furthermore, permission was granted to engage in some note-taking during the interviews. Any additional insights were noted immediately after the interview. A period of approximately one year was taken for acquiring the bulk of the data, which reveals the feelings, experiences and thoughts of these native students with regard to <u>their</u> 'education' at the institutions.

Another request that required permission was the use of their names within the research. Six granted permission (much thanks to them.) The remainder declined. Some of the reasons stated for not wanting to be acknowledged within the research was the guilt feelings attached to their revealing the negativity and the mistreatment by the establishment. It seemed to feel almost like betrayal and deceit especially as some still had connections with the church. But the manner in which authoritative figures still affected them today was also a factor.

A challenge that must be faced in gathering personal data is the retrieving and (re)contructing historical evidence from the personal lives of native adult people. General views of their childhood life through

reminiscing, are products of adult perceptions of their 'school' or childhood experiences. But viewing it from the Native adult perspective, the 'word' of traditional elders is held in very high esteem, as this is the one way oral traditions have been upheld and perpetuated. Therefore, their 'word' is not disputed nor questioned, at least not in the sense of questioning the validity of their perceptions or their own realities. In addition, the Indian belief in the 'power of the word' or practice of the oral tradition, signifies that there is a Native perspective, and that special care is taken on the 'spoken word,' as people say, believe and manifest that which is spoken. Similar reponses validate more so the notion of coinciding or parallel lines of thought pertaining to a collective and native perspective, as well as substantiating historical evidence. This challenge requires the researcher to be very careful in presenting the words of the elders, and constrains some possible interpretations which might be placed on those words.

The informants who were selected had resided at the following institutions: Sacred Heart School at Saddle Lake, Alberta; Blue Quill's School near St. Paul; Red Deer Industrial School; and the Edmonton Indian Industrial School. It was known also as the St. Albert Residential School and since the early 1970's has been Poundmaker's Lodge . The Edmonton Indian Industrial School was under the management of the Methodist Church.[3] Sacred Heart School closed in 1931 and all staff and students moved to Blue Quills, and the Red Deer Industrial School closed in 1919 with students and staff moving to the Edmonton school. The first two schools were Roman Catholic and the second two Methodist, later United Church.

**School Experiences: Duration and Curriculum**

Duration of schooling for these Indian students lasted from about three to ten years. During that time, the summer school holiday was only one month (Blue Quill's) from July lst to August lst. Eventually the school

[3] This institution is not to be mistaken by the St. Albert / Youville Residential School which was administered by the Roman Catholic Church. Youville had a mixed population of non-native students outnumbering native students.

recess was increased to l 1/2 months, and finally (after these students had left the school permanently), holidays extended to two months.[4] There were no home visits made during Christmas and Easter by the students. Even on such occasions such as a death within the family, especially when the location of the school was far away from the reserve, students not only did not visit their homes but, as a rule, were simply not notified.

Most informants conveyed similar information with respect to the curriculum and operation of the school which was the half- day 'school' system; the rest of the day was work-oriented. Academic subjects included the three R's - reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic with a fourth subject incorporated - religion. (Actually, these can be considered as the four R's of Indian education.) This last subject was not necessarily an established form of studying 'a' religion per se, but rather of having the staff 'teach' it through inculcation and indoctrination of the dogma of the church denomination it involved, and applying those rituals with the strict adherence and regimentation of a 'total institution' on the 'inmates'.[5]

In fact, rituals and regimentation within the church denominations became ingrained into the students. One student described how they were lined up, single-file upon attending mass on Sundays. As the non-native community were taking their seats in church, these native students 'had to' bow their heads to these people. This was a reminder to the students that they were not as good as these people who 'shared' the Christian service with them. It was "training to us to show us we were inferior and that we were at the bottom of the scale."[6]

Most of the native students stated that the 'education' they received was very mimimal. In fact, in terms of student- teacher interaction, there was practically no reciprocal verbal communication. Classroom teaching

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4 This information was gleaned from archival sources, especially Public Archives of Canada, R G 10 Vol.10412, File 40C, Reel Int.#70.

5 The lack of privacy and student's inability to keep their personal possessions on them is documented in Persson, 1980.

6 It may have been different if the students were reminded that they did this as a sign of respect as such would have been the case within traditional native cultures, but instead they were reminded that they were inferior to white people, therefore not on par with them.

was lecture-style, more a 'talking-down' rather than 'talking-to' style. The students were as ill-prepared in facing a totally new environment as were the staff in teaching a culturally- different group of whom they had neither knowledge, nor concept nor understanding. But in so doing, staff members were usually (initially) motivated by ecclessiastical reasons (see the United Church report, above), whereas according to some students, they, in contrast, began with a hopeful expectancy of "learning something new."

Inquiry was made as to how students approached teachers and/nuns about leaving the classroom when the need arose for necessary bodily functions. One student answered, "We didn't speak their language and they didn't speak ours. So we would approach the teacher by holding ourselves and making motions with our hands that we had to use the toilet." We understood them to grant permission. Body language was one way that students communicated to the teachers especially since the English language had not yet been mastered, although messages were confused a great deal of the time.

**Positive Experiences in Residential School**

The participants were asked to talk about their positive and negative experiences at residential school. They reported some positive aspects to residential school life. All students were in total agreement (even though interviews were done separately and privately) that 'learning' was the one experience that they all enjoyed.

One participant (male) stated that the "half-day in school" was the only good experience and memory he had of his school life despite the "great difficulties in understanding." Other students "would have gladly continued past grade eight" but due to circumstances beyond their control, they could not proceed. One (male) student had parents who were in a financial position to be able to pay for the continuation of his education past the eighth grade if it were not for the fact that "Indians were not allowed" to get any more training than was deemed necessary by the

government and church educators. [7] Another 58-year-old female student stated that she "would have liked to continue her training but her parents were poor, nor would the Department pay for it." Therefore, she left at the age of sixteen. This same student recalled that her initial reaction upon admittance to the residential school was "great feelings about something special, becoming a great student." She enjoyed the creative portion of her sewing and cooking and she did her best in these areas.

Some native students who enjoyed the 'vocational' or 'industrial' aspect of the 'curriculum' were those employed in the 'domestic section.' For example, one male in the bakery preferred this "practical aspect" and some females liked sewing. In contrast, male students who "labored," as one claimed, "in the stables" did not appreciate the work at all. It may have been enjoyable if it were not for the "time" regimentation, and especially the "getting up every morning at five o'clock" regardless of the extremity of weather.

Upon reflecting, another "good" experience that evolved was the fact that these native students made friends with other children from other tribes and reserves. It was difficult to communicate initially in cases where native languages were different, but once they made the emotional bond, they kept that "connection all their lives." For those who "grew up" together at the residential school, it was those friendships that assisted in their tolerance and endurance of this new way of life, and the fact that it was commonly "shared" by friends...almost like "you're not in it alone." It was those types of emotional ties that "held" them together.[8]

A female informant stated that "the experiences were bad," that "it was difficult to look back." But upon reflecting through 'adult eyes,' there

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[7] Indian Affairs, Public Archives of Canada, RG 10, Vol. 6363 File 759-10, part2, quoting Section 10G(1) of the Indian Act.

[8] Gresko makes a similar observation in her 1975 study:
"It might even be said that the efforts to transform western Indians into civilized Christians through educational programs did not halt but in fact encouraged native involvement in traditional social and religious institutions, stimulated resistance to the assimilative efforts of white government and missionaries, and encouraged the generation of modern Indian rights movements" (p.165).

had been a "learning process" taking place, therefore despite the fact that she "saw so much hard times" and the "torture," she later (much later) "felt great in challenging the world after the consequences of the boarding school." As a result, she "accomplished a great deal in raising her own nine children, as well as her sister's nine children." That alone was a feat in itself! The trait that she valued the most was the "sharing and loving now" and the fact that she acquired "great emotional ties" while at the residential school and "still kept those friends today."

In addition, two of the four female participants stated that, during their stay, there were,"some nuns who were nice," and were there "for the love of the people, but not all." The two students who noticed that some nuns were kind were both orphaned, and thus had attached themselves to a 'parental' figure. Both had resided at Blue Quills, but not at the same time. Both also had been subjected to and witnessed some of the disciplinary measures within the institution, documented below. The fourth informant did not make any reference to 'kind deeds' practised by the nuns.

One of these elders stated stated that the one 'sort of' positive factor about the residential school was the fact that orphans were kept there. She herself, was one. "It might have been good for foster children," and yet such "was not so" due to the kind of institutionalized setting of the school. This lady summed it up by stating that the pain and suffering, the mistreatment that she and her fellow-students experienced, gave her the determination to be her own self, to live her life not by the dictates of "other people, especially non-Natives affiliated with the Roman Catholic church" but according to the way she herself deemed best.

One male student who had been at Edmonton Industrial School said, in retrospect, that within his generation, "all were good workers. Today young people are not like that." He further stated that "the part of survival was okay", for example the "threshing and working" for themselves "was okay."

## Negative Experiences in Residential School

There was no exception at all amongst the informants as to their being affected by negative experiences and mistreatment by some staff member. All students recalled the homesickness, the loneliness, the alone-ness, the lack of family contact, the unfamiliarity of the new environment, the lack of personal freedom, the 'cold' atmosphere or lack of feeling of the institution, the 'distance' (social distance) placed between educators and native children, and the fear - initially of the unknown but later developed and instilled within the hearts and minds of themselves as little children.

The environment that they had not been prepared for in any way was at times too overwhelming, too strict, too militaristic. For example, they talked of the regimentation, the time-orientation, the daily routine of "always" getting up no later than 5:30 every morning - summer, spring, fall and winter without ever being allowed to "sleep in on cold, blizzardy and freezing mornings."

In fact, two informants, a male and a female, one from Blue Quill's and the other from Edmonton Industrial both stated that "it was worse than a jail." The 70 year old elder (male) added that "at least if you were in a jail, you wouldn't have to get up every morning at five. We had to get up every morning at five. And there was hardly any food to eat, so we would steal a lot of grain." This student worked in the stables.

The system was a supposed rotating system in which each child would get an opportunity to be trained in different "industries," but this student remained solely in the stables during his eight years at the residential school.The other aspect that distressed this student was the fact that even on cold -40/50(F) weather, these young boys were expected to get up to begin their "vocation."

One male elder (Saddle Lake) was a 'supposed' graduate from the Edmonton Indian Industrial School. By 'graduate,' he completed the level of formal education to warrant a diploma which was from the eighth grade. One of the "promises" given to students as a way of reward or

incentive upon graduation by the Department of Indian Affairs, was the granting of a loan to assist these graduates in the beginnings of a "new and agricultural" way of life, mainly in acquiring cattle. This graduate never was awarded that which was promised to him although some other "grads" received their allotted share. He "didn't bother" Indian Affairs since his father already owned cattle and he claims that that may have been the reason why Indian Affairs did not come through with their "promise" (Compare Dempsey, 1978:56).

The school which he attended was operated by the Methodist Church so there was 'church' or 'religious training' every morning for one hour. Discipline was very strict and severe both in the classroom and 'on the job training.' Students were strapped and shackles placed on them as a form of punishment by a "very mean" principal and minister.[9] This elder exclaimed that during the course of his 'life'time at the school, "hard labor" began evey morning at 5:00 even though he was only ten years old. He was one of four boys who worked at the "stables, cow barn, looking after cows, pigs, and horses." Other chores entailed "harnessing horses" in order "to get/haul wood" as "wood and coal" were the primary sources of heating energy for the school. "Barns were cleaned out by shovelling out manure." In addition, during the fall, the boys assisted in the harvesting of crops, and in this case, the use and operation of farm machinery such as the threshing machine. This place of 'learning' was 'learning alright' about the hardships entailed by Indian students who were yet unaware of the motivational tactics and methods employed by this other culture.

This elder relates one other outstanding experience that was shared by seven other male peers and eight females. Being that times were difficult enough as they were, what with the starvation diets and the lack of belonging, some students decided to add some spice to their already drab existence. Six of the older boys harnessed a team of horses that belonged to the school, eight of the older females jumped into the wagon, and two younger boys tagged along, and they all "snuck off" to a dance. Of course,

[9] His recollection was that this person was J.F. Woodsworth. There is report of the "use of shackles" on record in the National Archives (Public Archives Canada, RG 10, Vol 10412 File 40C Reel Int. #70.

they all got caught! For punishment, all the boys received a complete shaving of their hair with a clippers. Some fellow students claimed that the initials I.D. were left on the otherwise shaved heads of the boys, signifying that they were possessions of the Indian Affairs Department.[10] The girls were sent to their room and not allowed to attend classes. Instead for punishment, they "had to go to work - manual labor for one week."

The younger boys did not take graciously to the shaved heads, so as further rebellion to the system, they "ran away from the school" and began their trek home, which was approximately 130 - 150 miles away. Since they were unable to tackle the distance all in one day's walking, they spent one night at a farmer's house. The farmer wondered why the boys kept their hats on, even upon retiring for the night. The boys insisted that that was the way they slept at the school, knowing full well that it was a lie. Actually, they were feeling humiliated at having haircuts that left them completely bald. Upon arrival at home (Saddle Lake, Goodfish Lake, and Kikino) they stayed a couple of days before they were shipped back to school. One elder claims that his parents did not have any choice in the matter but to have him returned to the school. Punishment this time was "hard labor for one week, no school at all", and the humiliation of having no hair at all.

According to this student, who had been at the Edmonton Industrial School, food was very meagre especially in relation to the amount required for the sustenance of health and body energy in comparison with the manual and physical work that was entailed by the boys. Therefore, students "had to steal a lot of grain" for mere survival. In fact, the boys even "killed rabbits on weekends and cooked them in the bushes" to supplement their insufficient dietary requirements. They became 'survivors', not only of the institution itself, but of a system that failed to recognize their own physical and basic needs.

Another outstanding memory by a female informant (Saddle Lake) of the Blue Quill's School was of "a lonely life, being herded constantly due to

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[10]See an example of similar shaved heads in the photograph in Appendix 11.

the routine." Being so time-oriented and time-conscious were simply not her best traits. "In a way, it was not good to get up so early every day. Beginners were allowed to sleep in a little." Life for her at the residential school began at the age of seven. The older girls who were "trained for trade" were usually thirteen years or older, and were instructed in "mending, crocheting and sewing suits for the boys." Therefore, this "training was useful - the cleaning up," as well, at least she "learned how to keep" her "house clean."

Disciplinary measures, in her opinion, "were too strict, especially when speaking Cree." She said that she was one of the older girls who counted the number of strappings (128 times) that one boy received from a nun.[11] Corporal punishment was a preferred method in disciplining children and a strap was used for such purposes by the nuns. The "brothers (Oblates) used their fists" when disciplining the boys. "Deserters or students who ran away from school" were "sat down" in the presence of all the students and deliberately "humiliated" as a form of punishment by a Master.[12] This form of punishment also served as a deterrent to students who might be contemplating running away from the school. In addition runaways were treated as criminal who were usually kept in police barracks, with the threat of being sent to an Industrial School usually in a far distant and isolated area such as Manitoba.

According to this student, she constantly "longed for freedom. The health of students was not the same." Somehow there is a correlation between emotional well-being and physical health. When she was thirteen years old, she had a tooth-ache that required medical attention but her needs went unheard and ignored until one side of her face was completely swollen. Then and only then was she taken to the hospital where she was admitted, after she had suffered needlessly for one week. Her closing comments were as follows, "Since they thought we were savages, they

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[11]In virtually all cases, the elders recalled the names of sisters, brothers, priests, teachers, principals and ministers who abused them. These names have, in most cases, been ommited from the thesis.

[12] Master Tuck

thought they could treat us like animals. We may have been primitive, but we were not savages."

Another sixty-seven year old female participant (Goodfish Lake) who attended school in the late twenties and early thirties began her "education" at eight years of age at Sacred Heart, later moved to Blue Quill's School and remained there until she was sixteen years old (the age at which formal schooling was terminated). This student also reiterated this same description of the "just like a jail"-type institutionalized setting, ("once you got there, you were stuck there"), of having the students "numbered", the regimentation and time factor being "difficult for younger children", and of "having religion" ingrained into them constantly. "No wonder people didn't like religion."

The teaching apparatus (e.g. slates) used in the classroom "did not mean anything" to her, nor the methodology of rote memorization; "using pictures" were foreign to the students and therefore they were unable to identify with such activities. In fact, upon "leave" from the institution, this student claimed that she had "not learned to speak proper English, but learned it after leaving." During the stay at the residential school, "students were not allowed to read anything from the outside world."

At the age of eleven years, this student became sick but "no one believed" her. She "was forced to go to school" in spite of her condition for several days. During the recesses and noon hour, students were all "sent out in the cold weather." Because of her illness, she and some of her peers "made a shelter by placing some cardboard and boards against the building" away from the cold wind. Here she would pass the time away, too sick to play, until it was time to go in. Finally one day, during early morning mass, she "passed out" completely. Then and only then was she believed and taken to the local hospital where she was diagnosed as having pneumonia, and detained for three weeks.

"Treatment" towards the students by the nuns was "very bad." For "speaking Cree", the only language that some students knew, "a small and

very short nun would jump on the backs of the children," piggy-back style "and slap them around on their heads or pull their hair."

While this student resided at Sacred Heart, "two girls ran away from the school and the police brought them back." These two girls were sent to their dorm "to undress and to put on their petticoats." Meanwhile the rest of the girls were requested to "stand up and form a circle." The nun asked the police "to spank" or discipline the two run-away girls but the policeman refused. Therefore, she asked the priest to perform the 'punishment' and he agreed. As he strapped the first girl on the seat, "she screamed her head off" resulting in a very short spanking. The second girl "did not make one sound", so the strapping proceeded longer than the first one while the rest of the girls looked on.

This same informant related another incident in which she was an eye witness. Three or four boys were accused of having drawn a picture on the blackboard, of a horse urinating. Even though it may have been only one or two students who drew this picture, not one of them admitted to it. As a result, "all of those boys got their fingers hit till their nails were knocked off and bleeding." When the parent of one of these boys heard about this incident, he made a visit to the school, but the nun who had performed the punishment had already "disappeared" from the school. "One of these 'students' is still alive today and lives at Saddle Lake Indian Reserve."

On another occasion, this same woman who was one of the sixty-two girls of various ages in the school, observed the following. A nun who had been very liberal in "punishing" the children had been "squealed on" by one of the students and she was determined to find out which one it was.There was a confrontation in the presence of all the girls with the nun demanding, "Who has been telling on me?" No one answered. Again, the nun demanded the same question. An older girl stepped out. She was asked to "go put on her petticoat" and requested to stand facing the back of a chair. The nun stated, "You have to be punished for being bad."

The first three or four strokes "were not that bad" but the strappings became more intense and more painful as they were concentrated on one part of the body. Therefore, as the girl used the chair as support and with each lashing, she would flinch and shove the chair in the process. Meanwhile, there was "blood squirting out of her" as she was at the time, menstruating. In addition, both "her parents were upstairs while she was being punished. Not one of the girls had the heart to go tell her parents. We didn't dare speak up or talk back."

A sixty-one year old female participant (Goodfish Lake) began her 'schooling' in the mid-1930's at thirteen years of age and stayed only for three years. She too, related incidents in which she was an observer as well as the antagonist. Her "industry" was "working in the kitchen, cooking, and sewing," (which she enjoys still today). Academic subjects simply were irrelevant and she never did identify with any of the subject material. The fact that she too, was an orphan, contributed to her attitude of "accepting fate", or in this case, "life" as it was at the residential school. She had "no other choice."

Her experience in the kitchen taught her not to burn toast. On one occasion when she "burnt toast, a nun pushed her against a hot stove." She may have had severe burns on her hands had she not been saved by a "big pot which had beeen left sitting on top of the stove." She "grabbed the big pot with both of her hands" thus "saving" herself "from getting burned."

Other eye-witness accounts entailed students being "strapped" as punishment for various minor incidents. "A girl who stole some thread, received a strapping." According to this source, at Blue Quills, "strapping" was 'the' method used for punishment.

Another female student from Saddle Lake, who resided at Blue Quill's School for eight years in the late thirties and early fourties (age eight to sixteen) relates the "difficulty" of adjusting to the 'new' environment and of being "stuffed with religion." Upon entering school, she had "great feelings about something special and being a great student." The first thing that she recalled was "the pride in having long hair, but they

(students) had to get it cut off completely. Coal oil or buck oil was rubbed in the scalp until you bled."These procedures undertaken to de-louse were both humiliating and degrading to those on which it was done. Long hair has always been considered a 'plus' in Indian country, part of one's natural anatomy, therefore not to be tampered with but to be left in its natural state. It was the policy of the 'church' for both boys and girls with long hair, to have their hair chopped off.[13]

She also recalls that "you couldn't smile at a boy. If you did, there was a big cardboard sign placed on your back, and you had to make 500 rounds around the tables while the rest of the students looked on. It was very humiliating." In any school," she continues, "there is both good and bad. Your friends get tempted." Her story is as follows:

A man used to come to the school to show films and on this one occasion, she and her friends witnessed a side-show in which "this man and the nun were hugging each other." The girls began "laughing" and as a result "all were in trouble." Her friend was "called in" and interrogated by the nun. A physical 'disciplinary measure' transpired, and in retaliation, the girl "tore the nun's hat off." The girl was sent up and locked up temporarily. In the meantime, the rest of the girls were numbered from one to a hundred and this informant was one of the first four girls.

Sister Superior came in with the girl who had been locked up and brought her to the table. "She was wearing only a slip, no underwear and barefooted." She was "laid down on the table." The girls numbered one to four, were "called to the table to hold down the hands and feet of this girl" on the four corners of the table. As this "best friend" of this informant "was getting whipped," the girls who were holding her down, were also "ordered to count" the number of strappings she was getting. This student recalls "it was one hundred times. Torture was bad," she claims. This

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[13]According to one source (Duck Lake), after baptism or first communion, the "Father's" policy was to cut off the braids of Indian children who had supposedly become "Christianized." This was one of the greatest sacrifices made by the Indians. In addition, name-changing occurred at this time. Indian names were "deleted" and replaced with "white" names.

student suffered just as much as her friend, especially because she was "ordered" to participate in this demeaning form of punishment on her "best friend."

This student reminisced about the "bitterness, the cruelty and torture of mistreating kids." During her time, students "were not allowed to speak their language, yet. It was very rough from the beginning...very critical in asking persmission to use the bathroom." The majority of the workers were French, therefore there was difficulty in communicating.

After this student had acquired her first job (later in life) located at Blue Quill's, the school of her 'childhood memories,' she initially thought of seeking "revenge." But she told herself to put her "bad memories of Blue Quill's behind" her, and "that there was a better future than that." One of her greatest lessons in 'life,' and the fact that she "saw so much hard times," was the result of her "taking in kids" even while she "was studying," and that she "looked after her "father till he passed away at ninety- seven years of age."

This next elder, a sixty-nine year old male from Saddle Lake entered Sacred Heart residential school at nine years old and was one of the students who moved to Blue Quills. He remained there for the next six years, attending residential school in the late 1920's and the early 30's. He claimed that there was "not much" in terms of "courses" although they were taught "a lot more religion and did more work looking after 130 head of cattle, pigs, and chickens." At that time Blue Quill's was considered "an industrial school. The purpose was for the school to be self-supporting, but that was not so." This elder recalls that he had "no milk in his porridge" and yet he (and the other students) "milked twenty-six cows." He made a comparison to "Kingston Pennitentiary's menu and the regimentation" of that institution which was similar to that of Blue Quill's. Furthermore, "students were punished in front of everyone...to scare all others. A strap or a leather whip or a leather shoe was used. In church, a wooden clapper was thrown at you." Scare tactics prevailed, even in the house of God.

For this student, there were simply "no good memories at all." Terms, such as "savages and pagans" remain in his memory. In addition, he referred to "Father Lacombe's chart." (This student related the incident, cited earlier, of "lining students up, single file" and having "them bow to the white people in church to remind them that they were inferior.") In fact, according to this elder, "their goal (the educators and the church) to take the 'savage' out of the Indian did more harm instead....for telling them (the native students) that they were no good, they were pagans, and that they adored more gods." He said that there was actually an alternative way to advancing one's education past grade eight... "Unless you were going to become a priest or a nun, they would otherwise cut you off at the eighth grade." Parents had "no say" in the education of their children whatsoever. His summer holidays were "two weeks long, and no home visits during Christmas or Easter," the holiday season which he defined as "the height of being assimilated."

He made a reference to "John Tootoosis" (a well known Indian rights advocate and [past] elder from the Treaty Six area) and how "from the time of the Riel Rebellion, all Indians were (stereotyped) bad," and how "they had to 'develop' the concept of the "good Indian." During that era, "Indian agents controlled everything. All (Indians) were 'institutionalized' and due to this institutionalized thinking, a maximum of 58%" of the population "in jails, were Indian people." Yet, "Indian Affairs could not control Indians. For those Indians who became assimilated (to a degree), acculturated maybe, and began living off reserves, resulted in the formation of "ghettos," instead.

He did claim that "agricultural skills" were acquired by the 'training' he received at the school. In addition, he did learn "a bit of reading and speaking (English). School stressed, 'change the Indian.'" Furthermore, he added, "Children are learning (white) skills and forgetting the balance (of life) or their (native) spiritualism." For example, "the welfare system is not working."[14] We're paying a price for education... too much of a price."

[14] It seems to me this happens because welfare mentality creates a dependency on a system that does not get at the root of the problem but victimizes instead; therefore, it is not the solution.

At school, "nothing is taught of parenting. We are deprived from (this) white other world. There is also bias from white people, drinking, etc. Indians can see where it hurts (e.g. institutions). We need to gain back that balance in everything (life). Today, their religion is all screwed up! I don't know their Jesus at all!"

Today in his reserve, this elder is one of the strongest culturally-oriented 'spiritualists' who operates his own sweat-lodge and other sacred ceremonies. At one point in his life, he had almost 'sloughed off' all his cultural values and adopted a system that did not acknowledge nor appreciate his own way of life. In fact, he recalls a time past, in which he would be participating "at a Sundance," and if they saw "the priest coming," they would "all go hide in the bushes." Due to his own belief of his own 'Indianess' and Indian culture, the experiences he encountered while 'becoming civilized,' and the lack of balance that he perceived in a 'world' that did not treat him as an 'equal citizen', were factors that contributed to his search back to his own Indian roots and spiritualism.

The next elder, from Beaver Lake, began his existence as a lone survivor of a flu epidemic that decimated his whole band in 1918. He said both his parents and two older sisters died on the same night. A few members of his tribe, his grandfather and the Chief of this band, had not been present when this fatal epidemic struck. Upon their return home, they "found" this 'almost' newborn baby beside his mother. He claimed that he was "too young to remember" but that he had been informed later in life, and that he may have been about "a month old, if that." He was then taken in by some member who raised him as a child, followed by some 'growing up years' at the convent. This boy was "kept by the priest" who 'served' his community and it was also this "Father and the Chief" who sent him to school at Sacred Heart when he was six years old. He attended this school and Blue Quills School from approximately 1925 to 1930. He stated that the "brothers" (O.M.I.) took him in and he "didn't mind because the 'Father' would bring (him) candy, and would leave (him with) money."

It was difficult being in the institution, "If you're all alone, you get all the blame for anything and everything." The one factor that he recalled

very well was the fact that he was "always alone," - alone in the sense that during his "stay" at the "school" or wherever, he was the "lone" member from his band, thus also a loner, at least at the initial stages of his schooling.

Although, he said that he stayed at Sacred Heart for five years, he did not remember it very well as "they" were in the process of making their move to Blue Quill's during that same time. As this student was an orphan almost from the beginnings of his existence, he did not have a 'family life' with which he could compare 'institutional life'. He claimed that he was "looked after okay," at least before he gained admittance to Sacred Heart. "Meals were poor due to the hard times" at Sacred Heart. But they "improved a little" by the time the move was made to Blue Quill's.

He did recall that "Stanslas Redcrow looked after the cattle in Saddle Lake" since he lived close to Sacred Heart, and he thought that "the younger children didn't work outside too much." Initially, he "worked for half a day in the garden" at Sacred Heart as his vocation, followed by "working in the bakery" at Blue Quill's. He stated that he "liked to learn," therefore he enjoyed "doing the practical, for example, working in the bakery, as he was able to do things for himself."

But it was at Blue Quills that he recalled the "one incident" that was to "turn him off school" completely.The "one experience" which he "preferred not to talk about" but nevertheless shared, was as follows. When he was "eleven years old," he claimed that "some boys and girls were teasing each other while they were eating together," and some incident "having to do with bread," transpired. He "got the blame" so as punishment, he was "taken to the boys' dormitory which was adjacent to the girls' dorm, but divided between the two sections by a thin wall and a nun's bed." A hefty "masculine nun" tied down his "wrists and ankles, face down to the bedposts with twine" and proceeded to "discipline" him.

In the meantime, the girls had congregated in their dormitory while this 'corporal punishment' was about to be executed, and one female informant (within this study) has substantiated the fact that "this boy was

strapped 128 times." She was "one of the older girls who counted the number of times that this boy was strapped." Further comments with regard to this severe form of punishment was that "during the commencing of the beating, the boy was crying out in pain but eventually, he was knocked out completely. Therefore there were no more sounds coming from him anymore except for the strap still being inflicted on an almost dead body." The girls were "terrified!" In fact, some of the girls had quit counting when they reached 100, and especially when "the boy was no longer making any noise." But the one older girl had managed to count the 128 lashes.

In essence, what had happened was that, initially this 11-year-old boy had been "strapped on the backside," but the severity of the pain from the "nail-studded strap" had been much more than he could handle. Therefore, in the process, he had managed to free the string from around his wrist and had made a complete rotation so that he was now on his backside rather than face-down. This turnabout of the boy's torso had not in the least deterred the nun but that she had continued her fanatic punishment "in between the boy's legs." He was knocked out, almost lifeless.

During the visit with this man, he stated that he "felt that the harness strap had nails in it because it tore into (his) flesh" and he began "to bleed all over." Furthermore he added that he "had been strapped over 100 times." This elder said that he "was kept at Sacred Heart school for the next two days" before being "taken to the hospital at St. Paul, Alberta" where he "was detained for one month." It was during this time that the staff and students of Sacred Heart School at Saddle Lake Indian Reserve made their move to Blue Quill's Residential School, situated about one mile west of St. Paul, Alberta. Furthermore, during his convalescence period at the hospital, this boy's "Grandfather passed away", (his last remaining relative) but he "was not notified," therefore he was not to learn about it "until much later." When this boy was released, he was taken to Blue Quill's where he noticed that "the nun was gone." He "never saw her after that," and added, "times were very difficult."

Later in the following fall, he "ran away from school." He "walked all the way home" by following "the railroad track up to the Goodfish Lake road. By then, it was getting dark." He was then "given a ride as far as Goodfish Lake where he stayed for one week" before being taken home to Beaver Lake. It was at this point that he "found out" that his "Grandfather had passed away."

In fact, distance was not the only factor that contributed to this practice of not notifying students of deaths within one's kinship. It seems to have been standard procedure to keep native students as ignorant as possible with regards to familial affairs as this was one method used in order that students be not influenced by the "barbaric ways" of the "pagans." However, there was a time when students who resided at Sacred Heart School (only during the time that this institution was located at the Saddle Lake Indian Reserve) were taken as a group to funerals there. The cemetery is located right behind the old Sacred Heart Church. In fact, it was the above student who noted this fact of having attended funerals during his stay at Sacred Heart but not so after his move to Blue Quill's School.[15]

Other recollections that reiterate similar experiences encountered by students in such 'educational institutions' include "not being allowed to speak Cree or to go home during the summer." This policy may have occurred in cases where "an orphan" had no place nor family to go home to, as was the case of "this boy." He further stated that "students were never allowed any personal possessions." In other cases of punishment, "some students had their hair shaved off completely." In terms of having any "traditional knowledge" passed on to him, he stated, "only if (he) went

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15 The following situation is discussed at some length later in this chapter, but this male student was disciplined (beaten) severely by a nun with a metal-or-nail studded 'harness' strap and couldn't walk for a month. He ran away from the school as soon as he was able to walk again. Upon arrival at home, he found that the only living relative he had had, his grandfather, who had raised him till the age of six when he was admitted to the residential school, had passed on sometime ago while he was at school. He felt despondent that he had not even been notified as he would have wanted to pay his last respects to his last and remaining relative.

somewhere else." His interest, though was to "continue the traditional path more."

The next fifty-six year old male elder attended Blue Quill's school in the late 1930's and early 40's. He recalled clearly that the curriculum was comprised of the four R's of Indian education: reading, 'riting, 'rithmetic and religion. When questioned as to any positive memories, he answered that those types of recollections were "rare" although he had "two good memories," one of which was the fact that he had "an adopted 'brother'" who acted as his "protector." The other "good memory" was the "big boys' extra privileges" given to them "in the strictest confidence by the priest" and that was "tobacco and cigarette papers." By the age of thirteen, this boy was already on his own, "operating farm machinery."

During this fifth grade, this boy was "kicked out of school."[16] Apparently, "a girl had run away from school," and he "was blamed as having taken off with her." One question that was asked of him when he did return was whether he had slept with this girl. He did not appreciate this type of questioning as he had not been aware of any runaway girl and it was all based on mere speculation. For punishment, he "was strapped" and as it was being inflicted upon him, he "grabbed hold of the strap and wouldn't let go." This resulted in an even harsher form of punishment; he was "tied down and strapped 100 times." In addition, he was given "a Kojak haircut," as he, upon reflection, termed this complete shaving of his hair[17]. The boy became "a habitual runaway." After "this beating" he "returned to school in the fall only to be released." The whip that was used to discipline students was referred to as the "cat-o-nine-tails" because of the metal studs on it.

"Discipline was similar to the Mafia system," the notion of "being controlled at all times, even in the shower." Furthermore, it was implemented "with the use of the strap." The staff was comprised of "nuns, a priest and a Master who all went by the books. There were no native

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[16]Balter and LaTour were in charge of the school at the time.
[17]See appendix 2 for photograph.

resources at all." He remembered "the Master supervised all. This Master as an ex-R.C.M.P. officer who was very strict. Due to his own guilt and mistreatment of native children, he would break down once in a while."

In retrospect, this elder revealed that he was a "witness and subject to that abuse. The only system was one of retaliation, destruction and (to) hurt." It was the only system he knew. When questioned as to what he learned in the educational system, his reply was "how to survive, either by force or by the art of cunning, due to the continual brutal harassment." He claimed that "there may have been some good, but that 90% of the students from the 1930's and 1940's later became alcoholics. Some died violently, some went to war. We were brought up unloved and unwanted till some of us did something about it. Our sacred circle was broken."

In his reserve, he claimed that "as many as one-third of the families are broken up." Upon reflection, he stated, "in those days, 'they' called it 'discipline', today it's called 'abuse'." And he added, "the most difficult thing" that he ever accomplished was "to forgive and forget." Today this elder facilitates workshops on a national and international scale in which he promotes and educates both the native and non-native sectors of society by promoting "traditional cultural and spiritual values."

In relation to the claim made in the previous chapter, of Indian graduates who were unfit for community life on the reserve, and who had "been in jail," two male participants who were interviewed confirmed this statement, but analyzed it from their experience and perspective. They claimed that they were "so brainwashed, so institutionalized, and just a number" that many continued to maintain this structured and regimented lifestyle in an unconscious manner. The two male participants, in particular, joined the Army. It seemed that they had to perpetuate this cycle which was difficult to break.

**Comments**

Most of the disciplinary measures meted out to these native students were extreme, especially so in comparison to the native traditional

approach[18] but even by standards in the non-Indian community. One has to keep in mind that traditional native people, especially those who were not yet acculturated to any degree, have had an established way of dealing with 'life,' have had their philosophies well in place before the coming of the whiteman and have practiced their spiritualism and their 'own' way of life before they or their children were introduced to the whiteman's ways.

In fact, in terms of "religion", traditional Indigenous people's belief system entailed "spirtualism", which to them is a universal concept and not an organized religion. Therefore it was (and is still) practised as part of that "wholistic approach" or "culture". It was the coming of the missionaries who introduced "religion" or "Christianity" to Indian people, and in many cases confused some of them. It is clearly evident that 'religion' was used as a control mechanism in keeping Indian people passive.

Because a great deal of respect, honor and acceptance were placed on the 'word of mouth' - the oral tradition of native people, trust was another virtue inherent in the practice and respect of humanity. In so doing, this process entailed 'sharing' - concepts which were not practised by role models at the residential school, yet within church-oriented activities and within the teachings of the Bible &/ Christianity, were virtues taught to be practised as part of Christian and religious dogma.

In terms of the behaviors of those who taught Indian students coinciding with statements of their belief systems, the two did not always correspond. It seems as though 'lip service' was prevalent as to how one "should" believe, but putting it into practise was a totally different phenomena, at least in administering disciplinary measures on Indian students. These rules of conduct were ingrained into the minds of native children, but in terms of acting out these 'teachings', they were not necessarily practiced by the staff. With traditional native people, one of

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[18] One has to keep in mind that native children were raised with a great deal of personal autonomy, amongst other things, not to be confused with permissiveness.

their philosophies in life, is to act upon and live according to one's belief system. This is an unwritten but well understood law.

Indian people, my people, who were supposedly "Christianized, civilized and educated" in a system that was not of their undertaking, nor of their choice at the time, struggled to survive within that environment...an environment that created a great deal of suffering, turmoil and confusion. This was their story, one which needed to be told, from their perspective, to be shared - in order to begin a period of reflection, a time to learn from past wrongs and injustices, a time to begin the healing process.

It is now time to take the responsibility within our own hands, and strive for an alternative that will be more positive, that will improve the 'condition' that has plagued our people for so long. It must be an alternative which will promote our cultural identity, our belief system, and our language, and one which will instill the pride, once more, of being an Indigenous person.

## VI: Analysis and Conclusions

This work was an exploratory study of the experience of Indians with residential schools to provide understanding of difficulties facing Indians today as they take control of their own schooling. In reflecting on the written institutional data regarding Native education, most of it indicated ignorance and a lack of understanding of Native people and culture.

This study has been done not for the sole purpose of reiterating some past theory about Indian people, their success or lack of it in terms of the educational process, but to provide some insights and more understanding, to alleviate cultural barriers, reduce negative stereotypes of "Indians", promote cultural pride within Indian people[1] and to assist in re-educating non-native societies with respect to the Indian perspective. This doesn't necessarily mean that attitudes will change, but perhaps there will be a re-thinking and shedding some 'light' on past notions.

As the McCullums(1975), have noted elsewhere it is readily apparent from this study that the educational or schooling system had little relevance in the social structures of reserve life. On the one hand, church and government policies assumed paternalistic attitude towards Indians treating them like children rather than adults, while placing focus on conversion or a complete transformation of their whole way of life. While emphasis was placed on institutionalized membership in a white society and 'in church' responsibilities, there was little evidence of development towards self-reliant and/ indigeneous leadership. In fact, rather than assisting Indians in assuming responsibilities to deal with problems confronting them in a changing, pluralistic Canadian society, policies such as the 'permit' system, were implemented to restrict their movement and confine them to their respective reserves.[2]

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[1]To remind them that they, too, had made an impact historically and therefore a contribution to society, albeit unrecognized and unacknowledged.

[2] McCullum observes "...most...'graduates'...said the standard of instruction was in many cases so low that few people ever reached an academic level that enabled them to enter high school. It is noteworthy that most of the few university graduates and professional people have come from post-war years when students started to go to schools in the communities and more-and-more of the church schools became only residences.Even

But it is apparent from reading the archival material that the providers of Indian education, through residential schools, believed that what they were doing would improve the lives of Indians. Whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, they saw one of their main tasks as eliminating "pagan superstitions" and imposing a "moral law" on Indian peoples. They also argued that health was better in residential schools, that they were places where academic learning really did occur (in contrast to the day schools), that they introduced discipline into children's lives, and that problems which they had educating the children were related to Indian cultural characteristics (timidity, nomadic behavior, degrading dances and so on). Interestingly, the United Church in particular, seemed to recognize some of the problems of residential schools which lay outside the Indian culture; the 24 hour a day regulations and institutionalization of children so they were unable to function as independent adults when they returned to their home communities, and the loss of contact between parents and children. Nevertheless, they remained convinced that the residential schools were still necessary for education and once grandparents had attended residential school, existing problems would be overcome and perhaps day-schools could become the major means of providing education to Indian children.

Listening to those "grandparents", as was done for this thesis, creates a different story, although a story which fully supports the United Church's own recognition of some of the problems of residential schools (United Church Commission, 1935). Their lives as children were lonely, degrading experiences which came from the school, not their parent's religions. Little was accomplished in the way of academic learning, and discipline was at times brutal. Although all of these elders did not themselves experience brutality in the residential school, they all knew of someone who had, often overhearing or seeing the events. Thus, as a community, this brutuality was, in fact, experienced by all.

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though the structured life at the church hostel and the irrelevance of public school curricula for Native pupils did little to raise the standard of this education" (1975:178).

The research may have appeared to be negative, biased/ slanted and exaggerated, but in viewing the school system as it was 'meted out' to Indian "inmates," that is exactly the way it was. It was no fabrication from a few Indian students who had difficulty interacting or fitting in to a non-Indian environment, but a way of life - to be tolerated, at least while they were institutionalized.

It may have been "good and well" to educate these little Indian children and they may have been willing to "slough off" their "savage behavior" - become Christianized, civilized, etc., if these so-called 'missionary teachers' had accepted the differences in culture, and had made a sincere attempt to understand these Indian children, and worked at the educational process together with them - to learn from them, from their cultures, their languages, allow them 'to be' themselves, etc. in a recripocal manner. But to approach them in a dictatorial and paternalistic fashion, covered up 'nicely' by terms such as missionary, educators, men of God etc., in which a complete transformation was required instantaneously, was a bit much for any culture to digest and undergo.

The broader, overall and native perspective that has been shared by native elders and leaders nationally, (and even internationally amongst other indigenous cultures) is that the 'almost' cultural loss and/genocide/ extermination of various native tribes as distinct groups, points at colonization, economic exploitation and missionization as the chief culprits in the process of de-culturalization, acculturation, and finally and (almost) to assimilation.

In addition, if Indian tribes had been 'weak' culturally and spiritually, they would have been assimilated at a faster rate. Instead, traditional Indian people perservered, carried on and maintained their customs and traditions which have been ingrained in them since time immemorial. During the past decade or so, the pan-Indian movement has developed within Indian communities of North, Central and South America. In fact, the trend of non-native alliances gaining added respect and a willingness for knowledge and/ understanding of native cultures and

spiritualism has resulted in a "sect" that has been given the name of "Wannabee" Indians (want-to-be).

An analogy can be made with reference to the notion that the manner in which the government (Indian Affairs) and the church conducted and administered the lives of Indian people was 'paternalistic'. Since the 'relationship' was considered 'paternalistic' or like that of a father, then one can ask the question as to how 'children' should be looked after. The following conclusion follows from considering that analogy. This relationship has operated in a dysfunctional manner as it did not concern itself with the notion of 'relating to' or 'communicating', involving the consideration and cooperation of both parties, but more a 'following of rules and regulations.' Therefore, the result was an unhealthy relationship, geared more towards 'servitude' than relationships of a father and child. If one can make that distinction of the way in which Indian people were "looked after", treated like children who did not know anything, then perhaps the analogy of paternalism would fit the situation.

Since this was the reality of Indian history, students who were 'brought up' in these institutions did not have the models or examples on which to emulate their behavior, therefore families produced from this generation became dysfunctional. Most of the students from this generation who eventually had families but who had not had any role models during their young and impressionable growing-up years, experienced difficulties in the art of parenting. But thanks to "our" most kind and patient elders who guided and assisted with this matter until some parents once again took on that responsibility themselves.

Native spiritual leaders emphasize the "wholistic approach" in dealing with any aspect of "life", be it learning, socializing, healing, or whatever. It appears that finally today, this 'wholistic approach' is diffusing within the scientific and medical professions as has been evidenced by the underlying theme of the World Health Research Foundation (World Health Symposium, Victoria, B.C., 1988) Indian elders have, in times past, reiterated this same theme, unrecorded of course, but nevertheless promoted within Indian communities. This

"wholistic approach" entails the "whole being" of a person and that each aspect is just as important as all areas and if we choose to ignore one area e.g., the physical being of a person, then that area will create an imbalance, therefore affecting the 'total being' in some way. In this case, it would create some dis-ease (the beginnings of sickness).

Therefore, according to elders, attention is given to the cause, not just an aspirin or band-aid treatment that will temporarily alleviate the dis-ease only to have the person suffer again when the "band-aid" wears off. Such is the teachings of native spiritual elders. But due to the fact that their teachings have always been perpetuated orally rather than by recording it on "paper like the non-native does", their culture has been undermined a great deal, just because it is not recorded and cannot be looked up in some file for references. Therefore, much of what elders taught was unrecognized and unacknowledged, at least by the dominant society's standards.

In terms of some Indian families whose children were baptized by different religious denominations within "one" family, this was not a matter of confusion but a mere acceptance by the Indian people of all humanity. In accepting these religions, native people did not place distinctions on the various denominations, nor did they judge which "way" was the better way. It was the sects or missions themselves which placed their own distinctions and definitions on their 'different' doctrines. Indian people at that time, were not knowledgeable nor astute enough, at least according to non-native standards to be able to decipher the differences between the various dogma of the religious denominations. To them, it was a respect of one's belief system in which 'total acceptance' and a 'complete trust' placed on all humanity striving towards the common goal of helping one another achieve their utmost in creating a balance, harmony and respect for all and thus also, a belief in the Great Spirit.

In viewing the educational processes taking place with the native students, other insights were proposed by the elders themselves. For example, on man remarked: "there was always supervision" almost like "you couldn't be trusted alone." Later on in life, most of these students

'lived according to their image.' Most took to drinking and were unable to relate to family life even if they themselves had children. They were unable to maintain normal and caring relationships. Some took on a "macho image" in which violence and drinking were the norm, at least to themselves. It appears as though they brought along with them the hurts and injustices that they had felt while they were growing up and were unable to deal with. The psychological scars that were imprinted in their beings were a lot more difficult to resolve when they in turn, were given sole responsibility for themselves, especially when they had not yet 'found themselves' and in a world which did not recognize nor accept "Indian values." They hadn't been given a chance to prove otherwise nor had they been given the positive reinforcement that is vital to one's positive self-image and sense of worth.

One other point that an elder made in reference to the definitions and/concepts of the day was the one of "discipline" which he observed would today be called "abuse." Back in those days, children were punished by the use of the strap, or with other methods which were physically-oriented. Discipline, in this manner was not practised by traditional Indian people, and today much of it would be termed child abuse. In the setting of the residential school, and the overall situation in which Indian parents found themselves, it seemed almost impossible for children to escape this abuse even as it is difficult today for children to escape abusive families.

As one elder summed up in her conclusion,

> In retrospect, if whiteman thought we were so dumb, we learned our system first, then we learned their system. If we were really all that dumb, how could we have learned two systems whereas they have only one system to learn?. Really, it must take double the intelligence to be able to do that! Why could they not have learned from us if they perceived themselves to be the 'superior' race?

At one point a member of the Roman Catholic clergy remarked, that "If it wasn't for us, you Indian people wouldn't be where you are now." That statement was made with all sincerity although in defense because of

all the negative publicity that has centred around those, particularly the R.C. denomination,who had 'looked after' native children in residential schools. Maybe in retrospect, one can look back at negative situations and learn something of value, and that learning may provide the solution to past wrongs and injustices. It sometimes takes something negative in the past, to give a person or a group of people a determination, to recognize that the responsiblity lies within one's own hands, to make sure that the mistake is not repeated, to take it upon oneself, turn it around and do something positive, something better than what was done to these people. That is another one of our elders' teachings, and it, combined with the evidence of this thesis, suggests the clergyman was right, although not in the sense in which he intended his remark.

Other remarks made by the commission members in the thirties appear to be confirmed in this study; students did develop a violent reaction against religion, they did come to know others from other reserves far removed from their own, and they did respond like people who have been in jail when they left the school. It was this generation that one elder described as the "lost tribe." By that he meant lost in both worlds - the Indian and the white. That is, it was a fact that these people had lost a great deal of their traditional values (language, customs, spiritualism, etc.) by becoming Christianized, civilized and educated and yet had not attained that level of 'transformation' to warrant acceptance by the dominant society.

Finally, from the types of experiences that native students faced while they were "becoming" educated, civilized, etc., two themes in the literature have been reiterated and validated by the elders:

1. Native children who resided within these institutions experienced extreme cultural discontinuities related to language, food, cultural barriers, strict adherence to the rules and regulations of a regimented, militaristic approach,(lining up students, absolute silence and attention), and students were numbered and not allowed to keep any personal possessions. In fact, they had to adopt and adapt to a whole 'new' pattern in terms of the 'institutionalized' setting, a pattern very close to Goffman's (1962) description of a 'total institution', including the feeling of being "inmates".

2. Most important for the survival of any living species, there was a break in the continuity of maintaining family ties and the care and nurturance that is vital in the development of fragile and complex interpersonal bonds between the child and parent, in essence, the physical and psychological (emotional) needs of the child in order to establish familial bonds critical to every child's growth and development. (Goldstein, Freud, & Solnit, Before the Best Interests of the Child, N.Y. 1979, Free Press, p.3). To quote Rooke and Schnell(1983:1) "even the most impoverished and unsupportive family life is better than institutional life/...constant fostering experiences" (emphasis added).

A better understanding of these (Indian) perspectives on their experiences will help shed some light on the effects of institutionalized schooling on natives socially, psychologically, emotionally, physically and even spiritually. The social and psychological effects can be seen and felt in the processes of the social breakdown and disintegration which are visible in many reserves today. It seems reasonable to conclude that the very nature of government-church schooling, as the main factor, disrupted the intricate patterns of the extended families, of relationships between children, parents and elders; in essence, the most fundamental and central aspects of Indian life - the family unit.

It somehow seems ironic and unfitting that the responsibility of "cleaning up this mess" which was not totally of their making, should fall completely in Indian hands, for within the traditional belief system the responsibility of making amends and correcting injustices which begins a healing process reverts to those who have inflicted the pain and suffering. According to that belief and practise the hand that has created the hurt and the abuse is the same hand that can begin the healing process. Yet, a great deal of work being done by Indians today in confronting past wrongs and injustices will actually begin the healing process and finally re-create a truly healthy, morally advanced, and rich educational setting for our children.

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## Appendix A: List of Principals and Teachers of Indian Schools in the Study Area 1899 to 1923

Blue Quills Boarding School (R.C.)
Sacred Heart, N.W.T[1]
Saddle Lake Agency

| Principals/Teachers | Year End |
|---|---|
| Grandin, Rev. H. | 1901 |
| Balter, Leon (acting) | 1902 |
| Baltern, Leon (principal) | 1903,1904 |
| Balter, Rev. Leon | 1905 - 1911 |
| Boulene, Rev. Cyprion | 1912-1913 |
| Husson, Rev. A | 1914-1918 |
| Balter, Rev. L. | 1919 |
| Dauphin, Rev. R.L. | 1920-1923 |

Red Deer Industrial School (Methodist)
Red Deer, N.W.T

| | |
|---|---|
| Somerset, Rev. C.E. | 1900-1903 |
| Rice, Rev. J.P. | 1904-1907 |
| Barner, Rev. Art | 1908-1912[2] |
| Woodsworth, Rev. J.F. | 1913-1919[3] |
| (No record) | 1921-1923 |

Whitefish Lake Day School (Methodist)
James Seenum Reserve

| | |
|---|---|
| German, Miss Mina B. | 1900 |
| Batty, Miss J.S.R. | 1901-1904 |
| Chappel, Walter J. | 1905 |
| Whitford, Miss Annie | 1906 |
| Lee, William | 1907 |
| Batty, Inez W. | 1908, 1909 |
| Steinhauer, Harrison | 1910[4] |

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[1] In all cases where N.W.T. is noted, the location changes to Alberta after 1905.
[2] Certificate of discharge issued 1910; the implication of this is not clear.
[3] "The industrial school at Red Deer was closed from June 30, 1919, but as it was in operation for a part of the fiscal year, it is included in the statistical statement. Operations are under way to erect a new school to replace it on a new site which has been obtained near the city of Edmonton (Canada, 1921).
[4] Closed from June 1910

Goodfish Lake Day School (Methodist)
Pakan Reserve

| | |
|---|---|
| Smith, Mr. Vincent | 1900-1907 |
| Batty, Miss Jean | 1908, 1909 |
| Watters, Miss Florence | 1909[5] |
| Alldritt, Mrs. L.F. | 1911, 1912 |
| (no day school) | 1913 |
| Waters, Mrs. Florence | 1914 |
| Howard, Mrs. H.H. | 1915 |
| Howard, Mr and Mrs. | 1916, 1917 |
| Cantelon, Rev W.R. | 1918-1920 |
| Steinhauer, Harry | 1921 |
| Murray, J.M. | 1922-1923 |

[5]Closed during June quarter, 1909

Saddle Lake Day School (Methodist)
Saddle Lake Reserve

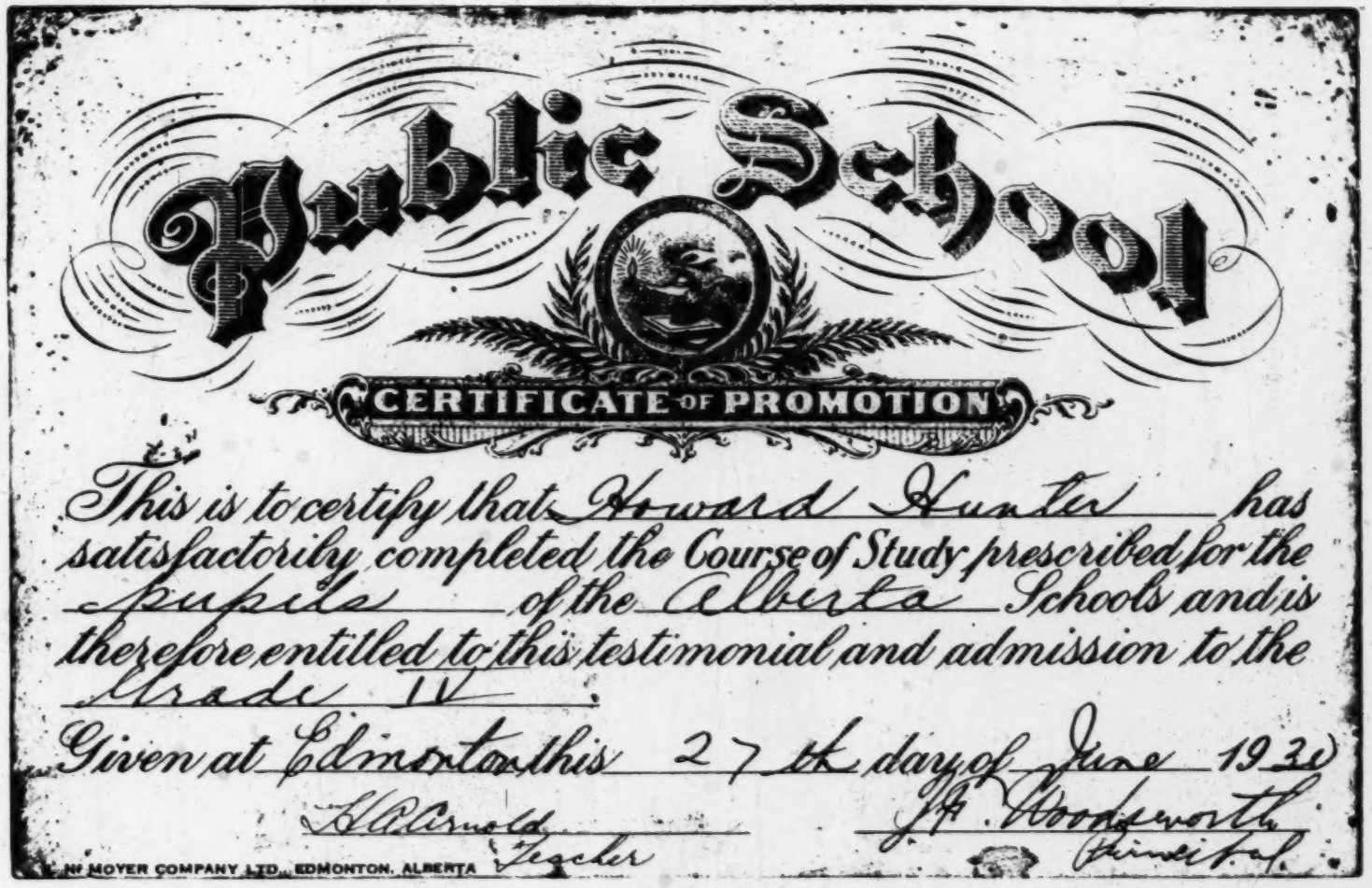
| | |
|---|---|
| McKittrick, Rev. A.G. | 1899 |
| Leonard, Charles W. | 1900-1903 |
| (closed during September quarter, 1905) | |
| Leonard, Charles W. | 1906, 1907 |
| Seller, Mrs. J.A. | 1908, 1909 |
| Apan, Mrs. M. | 1910 |
| Steinhauer, Mrs. James | 1911 |
| (no day school in operation, March 31/11 to Oct/14) | |
| Seller, Mrs. A.J. | 1915 |
| McKitrick, Miss W.S. | 1916 |
| Seller, Mrs A.J. | 1917 |
| Erasmus, Peter | 1918, 1919 |
| Steinhauer, Rev. R.B. | 1920,1921[6] |
| Steinhauer, H.W.J. | 1922 |
| Steinhauer, Gussie | 1923 |

*Source: Government of Canada, Session Papers, Department of Indian Affairs, 1899 to 1923

6 Rev R.B. Steinhauer taught the Samson Day school in Hobbema in 1918 and 1919.

## Appendix B: Photo and Documents

Photo showing young boys with heads shaved as punishment for having run away from school.



# Public School

## CERTIFICATE OF PROMOTION

This is to certify that Howard Hunter has satisfactorily completed the Course of Study prescribed for the pupils of the Alberta Schools and is therefore entitled to this testimonial and admission to the Grade IV.

Given at Edmonton this 27th day of June 1930

H. O. Arnold
Teacher

J. H. Woodsworth
Principal

W. MOYER COMPANY LTD., EDMONTON, ALBERTA

# INDIAN SCHOOL DIPLOMA

*This is to Certify* that Howard Hunter pupil No. 77 of the Edmonton Residential School having completed the prescribed course of study and training creditably and with diligence, is hereby granted an honourable discharge from the said School.

*In testimony whereof* we have subscribed our names hereto at Ottawa, this Twenty-eighth day of June, 1934.

P. Moore
for SUPERINTENDENT OF INDIAN EDUCATION

Harold W. McGill
DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT GENERAL OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

CANADA